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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

REALISTS AND THE ANALYSIS OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

BY

JOHN PUNDYK

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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OF MASTER OF ARTS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled REALISTS AND THE ANALYSIS OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY submitted by John Pundyk in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Prof. Max Mote

Prof. Tova Yedlin

Prof. Tom Keating

May 25, 1992

TO MY MOTHER

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the questions surrounding the failure of some of the leading scholars to anticipate major shifts in the foreign policy of the former Soviet Union in the late nineteen eighties.

Accordingly, the first chapter scrutinizes the work of several writers with special attention given to what they said about the possibility of major shifts in the external affairs of the Soviet state. The type of change which eventually did take place was not among the anticipated events. The thesis argues that the perimeters in which the potential change was viewed were bound by the Realist interpretation of international relations which proved inadequate for the task at hand.

The second chapter examines the Realist theory of international relations with an eye on discovering its attractiveness when compared to other approaches. The argument is that some elements of the theory have acquired the character of dogma and, therefore, must be re-evaluated.

The closing chapter illustrates that certain aspects of diplomatic history, which, because of the Realist interpretation are often taken for granted, can in fact be viewed differently. Specifically, the focus in this chapter is on German-Soviet relations in the inter-war period.

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INTRODUCTION

The present thesis argues that the analytical tools used to explain the post WWII East-West conflict proved to be inadequate as this confrontation approached peaceful resolution in the late 1980s.

The Soviet Union has probably been one of the most studied countries in recent history, yet when the moment of great change arrived, the experts were caught off guard. This happened because certain elements of the East-West confrontation were thought to be more or less unchangeable.

After an extensive review of the literature on Soviet foreign policy I was struck by a high level of consensus, among scholars of various stripes, on the subject of Soviet security requirements. To illustrate this point, the first chapter of the thesis explores the work of four prominent scholars: George Kennan, Seweryn Bialer, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Jerry Hough. It will be shown that until 1989, these experts were convinced that the U.S.S.R. would not be able to relinquish control of Eastern Europe.

Upon examination, I have found that the above consensus is the consequence of interpreting Soviet action using the analytical tools provided by the Realist theory of international relations.

Accordingly, the second chapter examines the above theory, explaining its success, as well as some of its weaknesses.

The success of Realism is based on the importance of the questions it asks, as well as the common sense language it employs in answering them. Among other things, the theory is an inquiry into the causes of war and the conditions of peace. In answering these, it provides an image of the world which is quite compelling.

But the problem with post-WWII Realism is that, in its zeal to replace interwar idealism, it may have discarded an important part of everyday reality. True, self-interest explains much of man's actions, but often people pursue ideas which have little to do with their immediate interest. Everyday reality is full of examples where men, or nations, throw themselves into a pursuit that is sparked by an idea of a different world. While the path they chose may have led to disaster, there is no reason to always suppose that they were insincere in pursuing it. The ideas which men (or nations) pursue are a part of our everyday life and as Raymond Aron has noted: "true realism must take into account the whole of reality."[1]

The last chapter discusses interwar Soviet-German relations. This illustrates another way of looking at some of the events which are often used as the supreme examples of Soviet realism, such as the destruction of the German Communist Party, or the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939. The argument

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[1] Raymond Aron, Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), 600.

is that the pragmatic manner in which the Soviets pursued their ideological goals often confused Western analysts.

This thesis is in no way offering a new theory of international relations, but it does point to the need for a re-evaluation of Realism, the dominant paradigm in the field. I do not think that Realism should be displaced by some other approach; rather, I would argue some of its premises must be readjusted. This would turn attention away from the traditional "givens" of foreign policy analysis, like obviously identifiable strivings of most states for security and self-preservation, to a place where we might take into account the interplay of domestic and international politics, as well as the role of ideas in man's actions.

I. ANALYSIS FAILURE: WESTERN SCHOLARS AND SOVIET REFORM

When Mikhail Gorbachev launched his "new thinking" initiative, he caught Western academics and policy makers by surprise. Western experts were challenged by the turn of events and immediately produced a deluge of explanations. Some were even hailed as the early prophets of change in the U.S.S.R..

It is hard to fault scholars for failing to foresee the course of Soviet change, especially since Gorbachev himself was not likely to have known where the road would lead. However, not being able to say what a future First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.) would do did not stop experts from discussing what he could not do. In regard to the latter, widespread agreement developed across the board among scholars. That is, they believed that much of Soviet behaviour could be explained in terms of great power politics. This consensus was especially pronounced with respect to Soviet foreign policy.

Thus, while many scholars recognized that with the passing of the Brezhnev generation in the early 1980s, some form of change was inevitable, they also concluded that there were definite limits to this change. This reasoning was based on the belief that the Soviet Union, as a Great Power, had many genuine (Great Power) concerns which would remain valid regardless of who had the top job in the Kremlin. For example,

Eastern Europe was seen as a strategic asset not likely to be relinquished.

The failure of Western analysis leading up to Gorbachev's foreign policy initiatives arouses curiosity and deserves scrutiny. If nothing else, the amount of resources expended on studying the former Soviet Union requires an explanation. More importantly, it might provide useful clues for future analysis of other countries.

Though the focus in the present chapter is on the work of Kennan, Bialer, Brzezinski and Hough, it must be pointed out that these scholars could have just as easily been replaced with others like Raymond Garthoff, William Hyland, Adam Ulam, Stephen Cohen, Erik P. Hoffmann, or Robbin F. Laird. Most of these scholars approach their subject differently, but today all share a common failure of analysis leading up to the events of 1989 in Eastern Europe.

Peter Zwick, a long time student of Soviet foreign policy observed recently (1991): "[a]ll the old and new models of Soviet politics have failed us."[2] With this in mind, I choose not to comment on the merits of the different models which analysts employed in their studies. Rather, what is needed is a broad examination of the overall contribution of each

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[2] Peter Zwick, "The Perestroika of Soviet Studies: Thinking and Teaching About the Soviet Union in Comparative Perspective," in Political Science and Politics, 25 (September, 1991): 461. Zwick lists at least nine models, such as "totalitarianism," "neotraditionalism," "state capitalism," etc.

analyst in a search for similarities. This may provide clues about the failure.

Some could argue that to approach the analysts in this manner is mean-spirited. After all, it may appear that I am faulting these scholars for not predicting the course of events in Eastern Europe. But this is not the point of this exercise. Political science, in general, does not claim to make predictions about the future. The issue is a different one and it is concerned with the approach to, and the tools of, analysis applied to these countries. It is in this realm that I see some serious flaws in the way the events were viewed. The criticism is warranted since the scholars in question are still highly regarded for their expertise and continue writing as if nothing happened.

The level of consensus among top scholars leading up to Gorbachev's succession down-played the role of communist ideology in Soviet policy-making. Even Stephen Cohen, an acknowledged critic of the "conventional Sovietology," wrote in 1983 that the "Soviet Union has become a legitimate great power with interests and entitlement in world affairs comparable to our own."[3] Since the ideology was seen as no more than empty rhetoric, something else had to be found as the motivator of Soviet foreign policy behaviour.

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[3] Stephen Cohen, "Sovieticus," The Nation, 9 April 1983, 416.

The answers were found in Russian history. The U.S.S.R. became a reincarnation of the old imperial Russia. Since Tsarist Russia had historic ambitions in Eastern Europe, Soviet foreign policy became viewed as an outgrowth of that earlier era. Once this idea sank into the imagination of Western scholars it became difficult to dislodge. This became evident when scholars refused to believe until the very last moment that Gorbachev would be able to give up Soviet control of the Eastern European satellite states.

The present chapter explores the work of Kennan, Bialer, Brzezinski, and Hough in order to show how the experts' hands became tied as they tried to explain Gorbachev's behaviour using the analytical tools derived from Russian imperial history. Each of the above writers involved himself, at one point or another, in a serious discourse about the relationship between communist ideology and Russian nationalism. In each instance, Russian nationalism, translated into a quest for security, became the explainer of Soviet behaviour. As shall be illustrated, this became inadequate as 1989 approached.

GEORGE KENNAN AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Perhaps no other man had more influence on American thinking about the Soviet Union than George Kennan. In 1986, recognizing his achievements, The Washington Post Magazine

called him "The Reluctant Prophet."[4] The Atlantic Monthly went as far as calling him "The Last Wise Man" in a cover story about Kennan in 1989.[5] Indeed, in many ways his insight proved to be prophetic. For instance, writing in Foreign Affairs in 1951 Kennan asserted that "the satellite states [Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc...] must, and will, recover their full independence."[6] This would be done, he argued, in conjunction with a major internal transformation of the Soviet state itself.[7] Judged from the perspective of 1992, the argument was truly visionary.

However, Kennan's overall contribution to our understanding of the East-West conflict is problematic, and may have, in fact, contributed to the general surprise with which the West greeted the dramatic changes of Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev.

In April 1989 American newspapers reported on Kennan's testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which he proclaimed that "[w]hat we are witnessing today in Russia is the breakup of much, if not all, of the system of

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[4] Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, "The Reluctant Prophet," The Washington Post Magazine, 31 August 1986, 7.

[5] "The Last Wise Man: An Introduction to the Diaries of George Kennan,"The Atlantic Monthly, April 1989, 39.

[6] George Kennan, "America and Russian Future," Foreign Affairs 39 (April 1951): 351-70; George Kennan, American Diplomacy, expanded ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 141.

[7] Ibid., 148.

power by which that country has been held together and governed since 1917."[8]

What did this "breakup" mean for the future of U.S.-Soviet relations? Kennan thought that while some disparities of interests would remain between the two great powers, none would "justify any assumption that the outstanding differences would not be adjusted by the normal means of compromise and accommodation."[9] Therefore, in Kennan's opinion, the Soviet Union would start behaving like "another great power."[10]

The above is interesting in the light of what he had to say in the same testimony about the state of Soviet - East European relations and the question of German reunification. On the first of these two points, Kennan argued that

> In the shaping of their economies and of their relations with the Western countries, those regimes now have essentially a free hand, provided only, first, that they do not challenge their obligations of membership in the Warsaw Pact; and second, they do not depart from the use of the term "socialist" as the official designation of their economies.[11]

Even as he was speaking, the process that saw the collapse of the East European alliance was already spreading from Poland

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[8] Don Oberdorfer, "Revolutionary Epoch Ending in Russia, Kennan Declares," The Washington Post 5 April 1989. Robert C. Toth, "Reform Will Bring 'a New Russia,' Kennan Says," The San Francisco Times, 5 April 1989, 9.

[9] Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, The Future of U.S. - Soviet Relations, 101 Cong., 1st sess., 4 April 1989, 6.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 5.

to the other members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The countries were leaving WTO and abandoning their "socialist" designation.

This argument about the future of Soviet-East European relations was also reflected in Kennan's thoughts on the prospect of German reunification. When pressed on this question by one of the Senators, he replied with the following: "I think there is no possibility of a unified Germany within the foreseeable future."[12] He gave two reasons for this. The first was the matter of East German membership in the Warsaw Pact which he did not see as being amenable to a quick solution.

The second problem he thought had to be resolved before the reunification could take place was the question of Berlin. Kennan argued, as the countries of Eastern Europe were striving to recover their political freedom, "the abnormal situation of Berlin" would put undue strain on this process. By "abnormal situation" he, of course, meant the continued allied responsibility for the city. To alleviate this, Kennan proposed that Berlin be

> taken under the wing of the European community or of some other general European entity and made the first fully European city with a European passport with a European flag and all that.[13]

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[12] Ibid., 25.

[13] Ibid., 25.

This would, he argued further, imply a gradual withdrawal of the "Government of Eastern Germany from eastern part of Berlin."[14]

But events took a different course. Within a year, Germany was reunited and Berlin was designated the capital. The Berlin Wall was down and the political emancipation of Eastern Europe was well under way.

While he was not alone in arguing these events could not take place in the near future, his ideas deserve further scrutiny in the light of the importance they were accorded by others. For example, reporting on the Senate hearings for The Washington Post, Mary McGregory called Kennan "the world's greatest authority on the Soviet Union."[15]

The accolades bestowed on Kennan are in large part well-deserved. His entire diplomatic and academic career was dedicated to the highest standards in learning and teaching about the Soviet Union and Russia. When he was called in 1989 to explain the events which were taking place in the Soviet Union, his answers were based on this life-time of study and experience. The arguments which he presented on the pace of East European political emancipation and German reunification sprang from his interpretation of the elements which he

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[14] Ibid. ....withdrawal to where?...

[15] Mary McGregory, "Kennan - A Prophet Honored," The Washington Post, 9 April 1989, B1.; Note also "The Last Wise Man," in which the Atlantic called Kennan "our foremost expert on the Soviet Union."(39)

thought were important in the dynamics of Soviet foreign policy. The only way to understand how he arrived at the answers which he gave is to go back and examine the history of Kennan's ideas.

The name of George Kennan is invariably tied to the post-WWII American policy of containment of the Soviet Union. Referring to Kennan's February 22, 1946 dispatch from Moscow, known as "The Long Telegram," historian John Lewis Gaddis points out that seldom is a single individual in a position to produce a document with "ideas of such force and persuasion that they immediately change the direction of a nation's foreign policy."[16] While an argument can be made that American foreign policy was already moving in the direction of containment, Kennan's input at that stage was critical in providing the intellectual foundation for that policy. According to Dean Acheson, who was the Secretary of State at that time, the telegram "had a deep effect on thinking within the Government.[17]

The significance of the "Long Telegram" lies in Kennan's attempt to warn the American government that in its relations with the Soviet Union, it was faced with a problem which he

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[16] John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 19.

[17] Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1969), 151.

said was "strange to [American] form of thought."[18] He further advised that in approaching the Soviet Government, America's "first step must be to apprehend, and recognize it for what it is, the nature of the movement we are dealing with."[19]

The bulk of the telegram is a point by point exposition of Kennan's thoughts on the relationship between Marxist-Leninist ideology and Russian nationalism, and the way in which the two influenced the formation and the conduct of Soviet foreign policy. But while Kennan was successful in isolating the various elements which go into policy making, he ran into trouble trying to explain which of the elements is dominant in that process.

In the telegram, one message is very clear: Russia was gripped by a political force which was "committed fanatically to the belief that with the US there could be no permanent modus vivendi."[20] He continued,

> This political force has complete power of disposition over energies of one of worlds greatest peoples and resources of world's richest national territory, and is borne along by deep and powerful currents of Russian nationalism.[21]

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[18] Department of State, "The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State" in Foreign Relations of the United States: 1946 Volume VI. Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union (Washington: G.P.O., 1969), 696.

[19] Ibid., 708.

[20] Ibid., 706.

[21] Ibid.

This was a clear warning, and one of the reasons that it carried such force is that it was couched in a geopolitical language familiar to American policy makers.

However, if the message was darkly foreboding, it also offered a strong ray of hope. The argument was that while the Soviet leaders would do almost anything to "advance [the] relative strength of the U.S.S.R. as a factor in international society," they were "neither schematic nor adventuristic."[22] That is, they were not bound to any plan that would require them to take undue risks in pursuit of their interests. Here we find the heart of the containment adumbrated

> [i]mpervious to logic of reason, [The Soviet Government] is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw - and usually does - when strong resistance is encountered at any point.[23]

Having established that the Soviet ambitions could be successfully thwarted by a determined demonstration of American force, Kennan is not clear about the source of these ambitions. First of all, he makes the point of de-emphasizing the importance of Marxism-Leninism, with its claim about the permanence of conflict among the capitalist and socialist countries; he assigns to it the status of an outlook which is put forth by the "Official Propaganda Machine."[24]

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[22] Ibid., 707.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 697-98.

Soviet Marxism-Leninism, according to Kennan, "does not represent [the] natural outlook of Russian people." However,

> [the] party line is binding for outlook and conduct of people who make up apparatus of power - party, secret police, and Government - and it is exclusively with these that we have to deal.[25]

Because the outlook "of [the] people who make up [the] apparatus of power is not based on any objective analysis of situation beyond Russian borders," he concludes that "it arises mainly from basic inner-Russian necessities which existed before."[26] Therefore,

> At [the] bottom of Kremlin's neurotic view of of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian insecurity...Basically, this is only the steady advance of uneasy Russian nationalism, a centuries old movement in which conceptions of offense and defense are inextricably confused.[27]

So while the people who were running the Soviet Union were bound by the official tenets of Marxism-Leninism, the real motive for their action, according to Kennan, was Russian nationalism. He defined Russian nationalism in a very narrow sense. When he speaks about the "traditional and instinctive Russian insecurity," he draws a clear line between Russian people and their rulers. It is the insecurity of the latter which is his main concern. Therefore, for Kennan, Russian nationalism is the byproduct of the rulers' search for

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[25] Ibid., 698.

[26] Ibid., 699.

[27] Ibid., 700.

complete security. "They have learned to seek only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromise with it."[28]

In this search for total security, with its ever present abuse of power, Kennan argued that Marxism Leninism provided Russian rulers with a "fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability."[29] Hence, the communist ideology, according to this argument, was nothing more than a rationalization of the Russian rulers' nationalism, translated into a quest for power.

Kennan expanded on the ideas of the "Long Telegram" in the famous "Mr. X" article which appeared in 1947 in Foreign Affairs.[30] The article, entitled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," departs from the telegram in one important way. While in the telegram the role of the ideology is quite clearly subordinated to his version of Russian nationalism, this is no longer so in this article.

Kennan argues in the "Mr. X" article that Soviet external behaviour is motivated by the need to perpetuate a myth of a

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[28] Ibid., 699.

[29] Ibid., 700.

[30] "Mr. X" [George Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs 25 (July 1947): 566-582. Reprinted in American Diplomacy, (1984), 107-128. It must be pointed out that the article generated a controversy about what Kennan meant by "containment" which lasts to this day. One of the better treatments of the issue is a recent book by David Mayers, George Kennan and The Dilemmas of U.S. Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

hostile outside world in order to maintain repressive internal structures.[31] This part is consistent with the argument in the telegram. Yet the later argument is preceded by the following statement: "Ideology taught them [Soviet leaders] that the outside world was hostile and that it was their duty eventually to overthrow the political forces beyond their borders."[32] But in the end, Kennan calls for a "vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies." With this statement, he clearly returns to the theme of Russian nationalism.[33]

The problem of jumping between ideology and Russian nationalism as the motive behind Soviet foreign policy stayed with Kennan through out his entire career. Was it ideology, some inherent Russian expansionism, or an understandable concern for security?

Writing in 1960, Kennan saw Soviet ideology as a "flexible rationalization for anything."[34] In an article published in 1982 he claimed that

> no informed person, either in the Soviet Union or elsewhere, any longer took seriously Moscow's theoretical and rhetorical commitments to world

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[31] "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, 570.

[32] Ibid., 569.

[33] Ibid., 575.

[34] George Kennan, Russia and the West: Under Lenin and Stalin (New York: Mentor, 1960, 1961), 258.

revolution[35]

Kennan then argued in 1986 that Soviet decision makers "are, for the most part, strong Russian nationalists."[36]

The conclusion that Russian nationalism was the motive force behind Soviet foreign policy enabled Kennan to explain the country's expansion into Eastern Europe in the following way:

> [I]t was the memory of the grievous injury done the Soviet Union by the Germans while they were fighting in that country that caused the Soviet regime to consider it vital to its security to retain ultimate control over at least the eastern third of Germany and all intervening territory.[37]

The above statement parallels much of what Kennan had to say about the nature of Soviet foreign policy over the years. The lines of Kennan's analysis of Soviet foreign policy fall clearly within the Realist Paradigm. Ideology is a rationalization for nationalism which in turn is a search for security.

But there is a troubling ambiguity in Kennan. As we have seen, he tended to interpret Soviet actions as those of a typical great power. Yet, as late as 1988, he was also asserting the importance of Marxist-Leninist ideology:

the leader of a movement that takes its ideology

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[35] George Kennan, "Americas Unstable Soviet Policy," The Atlantic Monthly, November, 1982, 74.

[36] George Kennan, George F. Kennan on Russian Society and U.S.-Soviet Relations: A Special Report (Washington: Kennan Institute for Advanced Study, 1987), 13.

[37] George Kennan, The New York Times, 6 January 1982

> seriously and regards Marx as the creator and the inspirer of revolution.[38]

Why Kennan would write this in 1988 is unclear.[39]

Had Kennan truly believed in the ideological commitment of the Soviet regime, the changes announced by Gorbachev during his glasnost campaign should have alerted him to the fact that some drastic foreign policy changes were in the wind. As it was, Kennan was convinced to the very last moment that the traditional Russian concerns of state, i.e., a need for total Russian security in Eastern Europe, would prevent Gorbachev from cutting the region free. Like so many others, he could not foresee and was not inclined to accept as a possibility the Europe of 1989.

SEWERYN BIALER AND THE IDEA OF SOVIET NATIONALISM

Writing about East-West relations in 1988, Seweryn Bialer argued that "[r]ealistically, the changes in the Soviet Union and the United States do not have the potential of doing away with the conflict."[40] At best, he added, the developments there would lead to the easing of the conflict and moderation

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[38] George Kennan, "The Gorbachev Prospect," The New York Review of Books 21 January 1988, 3.

[39] He may have been engaging in a subtle form of flattery towards Gorbachev, since the latter was likely to read the review of his book, Perestroika, in The New York Review of Books.

[40] Seweryn Bialer, "The Soviet Union and the West: Security and Foreign Policy," in Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy, ed. S. Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 468.

in "the rules of the game."[41] Bialer's firm belief in the continuity of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry was based on his conviction that contrary to the hopes of "wishful thinking liberals," as well as those of "wishful thinking conservatives," there would be no radical change, nor political collapse in, the Soviet Union.[42]

His confidence in the viability of the Soviet regime did not result from any ignorance of the difficulties which Gorbachev inherited from his predecessors. A year before the new Soviet leader came to power, Bialer wrote that

> [f]or many decades the political "superstructure" has shaped the socioeconomic "base" in the Soviet Union. Now the time has come for the "base" to take its revenge on the "superstructure."[43]

However serious the problems faced by the new leadership, Bialer believed the regime had a built-in reserve of legitimacy which would sustain it through the difficult times. He stated that "[i]n the final analysis, stability depends on the strength of a regime's legitimacy as perceived by the population at large and the elites."[44]

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Seweryn Bialer, The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1986; Vintage Books, 1987), 19.

[43] Seweryn Bialer, "Socialist Stagnation and Communist Encirclement," in The Soviet Union in 1980s: Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, Volume 35, ed. Erik P. Hoffmann (New York: The Academy of Political Science, 1984), 161.

[44] The Soviet Paradox, 36.

Bialer argued that while the legitimacy of the Soviet government was not as strong as that found "in traditional or modernizing democratic societies," it had carried the regime through some other difficult times in the past, i.e., the death of Stalin and the subsequent revelations of the Stalinist excesses.[45]

Bialer identified the sources of Soviet legitimacy in many places. First, he pointed to the "lack of any democratic tradition" in Russian history. Second, he identified a peculiarly Russian "desire for a visible and decisive boss." That is, for an authoritarian type of rule. Also important for Bialer was the regime's ability to improve the standard of living of the Soviet population in general. But perhaps most important, and Bialer always comes back to this point in other writings, was the regime's successful identification with Russian nationalism.[46]

This last point in Bialer's analysis was tied to the Soviets' unequivocal dedication to the retention of their Eastern European empire. Writing about Gorbachev in 1988 he concluded that

> the new leader [was] committed to the preservation of Soviet domination in its empire. This [was] not only for the sake of Soviet security but also, and primarily, in the interest of the leader's and his

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[45] Ibid., 38.

[46] Ibid., 36-7.

> party's legitimacy within the Soviet Union itself.[47]

Bialer also argued that controlling Eastern Europe was for the Soviets a "commitment that [differed] little from the commitment to protect the integrity of the internal empire."[48]

This Soviet determination to maintain firm control over the East European satellites was seen by Bialer as a major obstacle to a dramatic improvement in East-West relations. He wrote in 1984 that

> the committment to hold the Eastern European empire is far more important to Soviet leaders than the commitment to secure a durable rapprochement with the West.[49]

With the above axiom in mind, Bialer's skepticism about Gorbachev's ability to affect drastically the course of East-West relations is understandable.

In a way that should remind us of Kennan, we see a crucial, but at times confusing, aspect of Bialer's approach to analysis of Soviet foreign policy in his fusion of communist ideology and Russian Great Power nationalism. According to this conceptualization, these two elements formed

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[47] Seweryn Bialer, "Gorbachev's Program of Change: Sources, Significance, Prospects," in Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy, ed. Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 288.

[48] "Socialist Stagnation," 164.

[49] "Socialist Stagnation," 171.

the basis for what he called "Soviet Nationalism."[50] He described the Russian component of this nationalism in the following manner:

> Russian nationalism grew from the traumatic experiences of frequent invasions, defeat, and even near destruction. It is a nationalism for which disaster and crisis always looms large on the horizon. It stresses the separateness of Russia from other nations and the unbridgeability of the "we-they" syndrome in international relations. It is also an undiminished imperial nationalism. (emphasis added)[51]

By fusing an ideological component to the above definition of Russian nationalism, Bialer may have been attempting to stake out a position which differed from Kennan's view that Russian nationalism explained much of Soviet behaviour. Writing about this relationship, he stated that "ideology provides a driving force that intensifies Russian nationalism, and Russian great power nationalism keeps the ideology alive."[52] What he meant by "keeping the ideology alive" was that Russian nationalism was providing the communist regime with the legitimacy needed for its survival. But survival for what? What did Bialer mean by ideology and its contribution to Russian nationalism?

Bialer argued that Soviet ideology should be divided into "pure" and "practical" ideology, in order to be of any help

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[50] Seweryn Bialer, "The Political System," in After Brezhnev: Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s, ed. Robert F. Byrnes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 11.

[51] Ibid., 9.

[52] Ibid., 11.

to analysts trying to ascertain its influence on policy making. Speaking of the former, he said that "[w]hatever distortions of selectivity, interpretation, or addition were introduced by the Soviet elaboration of Marxist theory and of Bolshevism, Marxism-Leninism is still the core of this pure ideology."[53] This type of ideology, said Bialer, became ritualized by the Soviet regime and was used mostly for rhetorical pronouncements. As such, it was of little value to those attempting to understand the dynamics behind Soviet foreign policy.

Bialer argued that in order to understand these processes attention had to be shifted to "practical ideology." He defined this ideology as "the ideas, principles and preferences that provide the dominant conceptual framework of elite intentions and actions, the mind set of the leadership, the matrix of its collective conscience."[54] No attempt will be made to expand on the various components of this definition, especially since much of it covers the various domestic aspects of the Soviet life. Suffice to say that, for Bialer, the total experience of the Soviet governing elite, since the revolution and beyond, went into the make-up of this "practical ideology."

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[53] Seweryn Bialer, "Soviet Foreign Policy: Sources, Perceptions, Trends," in The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy, ed. S. Bialer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 423.

[54] Ibid., 424.

Since the present analysis is concerned chiefly with the motives behind Soviet foreign policy, it is helpful that Bialer singled out the "crucial element" of "practical ideology" as it applied to this policy. He argued that "the mainstay of the Soviet political elite's sense of common purpose is provided more than ever by nationalism."[55] This nationalism, it must be emphasized, was now located, by Bialer, within "practical ideology." Included in it, was not just the recent experience of the Soviet Union as a great power, but also the historical memory of Russian nationalism.

The importance of this nationalism, Bialer argued, was that it "constitutes the major effective, long lasting bond within the political elite and between the elite and the masses."[56] That is, it was shared by the elites and the masses alike and, as such, it provided stable foundation for Soviet foreign policy.

Bialer's insistence in 1988 that the resolution of the East-West conflict was not possible in the near future was based on his understanding of the dynamics behind Soviet foreign policy. What mostly got in his way was the concept of Soviet nationalism. As we recall, it was a combination of ideology and Russian nationalism. But since "pure ideology" of Marxism-Leninism had no influence here, what was really left was Russian nationalism. Bialer provided us with an excellent

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[55] Ibid., 425.

[56] Ibid., 426.

explanation of Russian nationalism in his attempt to define Soviet nationalism as

> defensive in nature...nationalism which grew out of traumatic experience of being often invaded,... nationalism which stresses the separateness of Russia...it is also as yet undiminished imperial nationalism...[57]

When all the layers of argument are stripped away from Bialer's analysis of the dynamics between ideology and Soviet foreign policy, what is left is stark and simple. The policy was driven by the imperatives of Russian great power nationalism. In the end, the position he staked out was not much different from that of Kennan. This belief in the imperatives of Russian great power nationalism led Bialer to reject until the very last moment a possibility that Gorbachev could let the East Europeans go their own way.

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI: FROM AN IDEOLOGUE TO A MASTER GEOPOLITICIAN

Zbigniew Brzezinski is an influential American scholar and a prolific writer. His recent book, The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century, has the distinction of being heralded as "the book that foretold collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and Russia."[58] The book is informative, but important is the fact that it was

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[57] Ibid., 427.

[58] Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century (New York: Collier Books, 1989, 1990), cover.

first published in 1989. By then, the disintegration of the Soviet Empire was well under way and as a result, all Brzezinski can be credited with is a post mortem on the collapse and not its prediction. In fact, as late as February 1989, Brzezinski argued that "an outright and explicit overthrow of the Communist system" was not a very likely scenario.[59]

In a way, Brzezinski has been quite bold about writing things that were just on the border of making predictions. And his results were always mixed. In his 1986 book, Game Plan: A Geostrategic Framework for the Conduct of the U.S.-Soviet Contest, Brzezinski had a section entitled "U.S.-Soviet Scenarios: The Next Ten Years." In the twelve possible scenarios he discussed as possibilities, none actually took place. The following scenario came closest to the actual events:

> Large scale decentralization of the Soviet Union that produces a more creative and productive society ideologically more pluralistic, with China and Eastern Europe forming a closer and basically voluntary relationship with Moscow, which consequently would make Moscow a more formidable and less one dimensional global rival.[60]

In the above formulation, Brzezinski draws on an idea which he presented at a conference in Ottawa in 1983 and which

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[59] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Will the Soviet Empire Self-Destruct?" New York Times Magazine 26 February 1989, 40.

[60] Zbigniew Brzezinski, Game Plan: How To Conduct the U.S.-Soviet Conduct (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), 141-42.

subsequently appeared in an article "The Soviet Union: World Power of a New Type."[61] He argued in the article that the contest between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was novel in that never before, in the history of great power rivalry, were the two principal adversaries so grossly mismatched. Historically, as in the contests between Spain and Portugal or that of England and France, either rival was

> quite capable of also providing wider commercial and political leadership as a supplement to its military preeminence. In effect, the rival, in displacing the preeminent global power, could provide and sustain equally comprehensive leadership.[62]

The Soviet Union, according to Brzezinski, could not assume global leadership because its economic backwardness and cultural sterility prevented it from developing a truly global reach. The country's status as great power was based only on its military might and, therefore, Brzezinski concluded that it was a "one dimensional power."

The reason for this cultural and economic weakness, argued Brzezinski, could be found in the "Russian communist system itself."[63] That is, the inefficiency of the centralized, command type, administrative apparatus of the Soviet state. Therefore, if the Soviets were able to

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[61] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Union: World Power of a New Type," in The Soviet Union in the 1980s: Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, ed. Erik P. Hoffmann (New York: Academy of Political Science, 1984), 147-59.

[62] Ibid., 152.

[63] Ibid., 152.

decentralize, as the scenario from The Game Plan envisions, they would become "a more formidable" adversary.

Brzezinski is led to this conclusion by his belief that the Soviet drive for global preeminence was derived primarily from "Great Russian imperial consciousness," and not from communist ideology.[64] The communist ideology, and the institutions based on it, to follow Brzezinski's analysis, became a drag on the Great Russian imperial ambitions.

Another one of the twelve scenarios in The Game Plan, which comes close to the actual events, is reminiscent of an argument that Brzezinski developed in "The Future of Yalta" published in Foreign Affairs in 1984.[65] That scenario posited

> [a] gradual socioeconomic decay in the Soviet Union and progressive emancipation of Eastern Europe from Soviet control in the context of a larger all-European cooperation.[66]

The above, which is taken from the earlier argument, is a thesis of Brzezinski's vision of the political emancipation of Eastern Europe.

Again, his conviction that Soviet domination of Eastern European countries was the result of traditional Russian goals, prevents him from entertaining a possibility that the impetus for the area's emancipation from the U.S.S.R. may come from the Soviet state itself. After all, if the Soviet

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[64] Ibid., 148-150.

[65] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Future of Yalta," Foreign Affairs, 63 (.....1984): 279-302.

[66] The Game Plan, 143.

expansion into Eastern Europe was not the result of the communist doctrine, Brzezinski is able to argue that even with the demise of communism, there would remain the continuing viability of the Soviet imperial system.

As far as the change in the division of Europe was concerned, in The Future of Yalta Brzezinski envisions only two possibilities:

> Yalta - namely the partition of Europe - can only be undone either in Soviet favor through Litvinov's more subtle design of domination through acquiescence, or to Europe's historical advantage by the emergence of a truly European Europe capable of diluting Soviet control over the region.[67]

The "domination through acquiescence" is another way to describe what many call 'Findlandization.' Should the American commitment to Europe diminish, argued Brzezinski, this 'Findlandization' process would have expanded into the Western part of the continent.[68] It is worth noting that he raised this as a possibility in 1984, a year after he described the Soviet Union as a "one dimensional power" based on a weak economy and a bankrupt ideology.

The second of the above two possibilities, as Brzezinski acknowledges, can only come about as the result of "a long term strategy of the kind that the West simply has not devised in dealing with the post-Yalta European dilemma."[69] This

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[67] "The Future of Yalta," 288.

[68] Ibid., 293.

[69] Ibid., 294.

strategy envisaged a smaller role for the U.S.A. because, argued Brzezinski, "America cannot undo the partition of Europe without, in effect, defeating Russia."[70] Since the confrontation necessary to defeat the adversary was undesirable, the work of drawing Eastern Europe out of the Soviet orbit had to be done by the West Europeans. The obvious weakness of such a forecast was the passive role which Brzezinski assigned to the Soviet Union and to the East Europeans in the whole enterprise.

The remaining ten scenarios in the Game Plan are a mixed-bag ranging from sublime to absurd. In short, he strives to cover almost every possibility. One scenario deals with "a central nuclear war." That is, a global nuclear war. Another prospect was a new detente based on "global status quo." That is, no real change. Also described was a scenario involving a conventional war "with the United States accommodating itself to a conventional defeat in Western Europe." He discussed a localized U.S. - U.S.S.R. conventional war outside of the European theatre, with the Americans prevailing. There was also a scenario for "an emergence of a fourth central strategic front on the Rio Grande."[71] These, and a few more, cover almost every possible future - except what eventually unfolded.

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[70] Ibid., 291.

[71] The Game Plan, 141-44.

By 1989, when the internal crises of the Soviet Union were intensifying and the Soviets were losing their grip on Eastern Europe, Brzezinski narrowed down his range of possible scenarios to four. One of these was quite credible in the light of what finally transpired:

> The fourth potential outcome - at this stage a remote possibility - involves the eventual transformation of the protracted crisis into an outright and explicit overthrow of the communist system.[72]

Even at this late stage (1989), Brzezinski was unable to endorse the above possibility ahead of the others.

Instead, he chose as "the most probable alternative" the following: "a lengthy and inconclusive crisis which might eventually subside into a renewed period of stagnation."[73] He arrived at this conclusion because of his belief that "the real prospect for Soviet Communism [was] destabilizing decay and not constructive evolution."[74] So, while he did not believe the Soviet system was about to collapse in 1989, he also did not think the system would undergo any significant change. To understand how he arrived at this point one must examine the evolution of Brzezinski's thought on the role of communist ideology in Soviet politics.

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[72] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Will the Soviet Empire Self-Destruct?," The New York Times Magazine (26 February, 1989): 40.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

Writing in 1962, Brzezinski warned that it was all too easy to see a continuity between the policies of the Soviet leaders and those of their pre-revolutionary Russian predecessors.[75] The apparent similarity was reinforced by a number of congruities between the institutions of the old Russian Empire and those found in its Soviet successor. One example was the centralized bureaucracy of the administrative organs or the secret police.

But while the old Russian administrative bureaucracy was extensive, Brzezinski argued that it was not as all-pervasive as its Soviet heir.

> The Czarist executive was very gradually, indeed haltingly, moving in the direction of closing the gap between the political regime and society at large by adjusting to the requirements of the society. But it moved too slowly. The Soviet leadership changed society in the image of its own doctrines so no such gap should exist.[76]

The above was, in essence, the difference which Brzezinski saw between the old authoritarian Russia and the new totalitarian Soviet Union. The important lesson to be drawn out of this difference, to follow the argument, was to grasp the level of ideological commitment of the Soviet leadership to the social transformation of their environment. That is, he saw ideology as an operative element in policy making.

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[75] Zbigniew Brzezinski, Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 41-47.

[76] Ibid., 61.

The Soviet leaders had rejected the old order, continued Brzezinski, and

> this act of rejection liberates the Soviet leadership from the limitations of the status quo, and the conviction of the Soviet leaders that they possess an insight into the inevitabilities of history justifies all all their acts. [77]

Hence, grasping the influence of ideology was essential in order to understand Soviet foreign policy.[78]

Two years earlier, in 1960, Brzezinski had addressed the above point directly by asking the following rhetorical question: "Do the leaders of ideologically oriented movements in the final analysis behave differently from other power-oriented individuals placed in a similar international context?" The answer he gave was "yes."[79]

In Ideology and Power he expanded on the theme:

> Admittedly, Soviet foreign policy, especially in its short term aspects, is concerned with national security, frontiers, national power, etc. - factors that inherently introduce similarities with Russia's traditional concerns. Quite unlike their predecessors, however, the Soviet leaders view these issues in certain long range perspectives and not as ends in themselves.[80]

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[77] Ibid., 52.

[78] Ibid., 98.

[79] Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Block: Unity and Conflict (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1960), 390.

[80] Ideology and Power, 108.

This meant that one could not talk about Soviet "national interest" as if it were divorced from its "ultimate ideological objective" of promoting communism.[81]

The essential point in understanding Brzezinski's approach to the Soviet Union in the early 1960s was his belief in the indivisibility of Soviet internal and external ideological commitment. It was this stress on the vitality of the Soviet ideological dedication which led him to argue in 1962 that

> the [Soviet] block is not splitting and is not likely to split. Talk of a Sino-Soviet conflict, or even a war between them, merely illustrates a profound misconception of the essence of the historical phenomenon of communism.[82]

The final rupture between China and the Soviet Union occurred roughly at the same time as the above words were printed[83] and we can only guess that it must have had tremendous impact on Brzezinski's thinking if he read his own output.

By 1966, arguing in "The Soviet Political System: Transformation or Degeneration" Brzezinski said that communist ideology was a spent force. The Soviet Union, as it developed to that point, lost all ability to regenerate itself and was

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[81] Ibid. Also see pp. 390-95 in Soviet Block, 1960 ed.

[82] Ideology and Power, 152. [Brzezinski adds that a split between China and the Soviet Union would be bad from the Western point of view (158). In his Memoirs he makes a big point in exploring the advantages of the Sino-Soviet schism.]

[83] The process took about two years to finalize, but it was already intense in 1962. See Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Pub., 1968), 661-94.

now in the process of decay.[84] The regime, as it moved from its revolutionary roots, through the Stalinist terror, and the Khruschevian interlude, had now (1966) arrived at a plateau from which the only way was down. Comparing the new Soviet leadership to its predecessors Brzezinski wrote scornfully that "[a] regime of clerks cannot help but clash over clerical issues."[85] All they could hope for was "muddling through," and not an advance on the road to communism.

Brzezinski's ideas regarding the diminished stature of ideology in Soviet politics were further amplified when he reissued his Soviet Block: Unity and Conflict as an expanded edition in 1967. He dropped unceremoniously from the book a section which appeared in the first edition under the title of "Communist Ideology and External Relations." This was the part of the original book in which he argued about the uniqueness of the Soviet "national interest" in comparison to the traditional powers, namely, that ideology played a significant role in policy.

He concluded his new edition of the Soviet Block with the following:

> Cynicism combined with institutional interests can for a while support the corrupted ideological

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[84] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Political System: Transformation or Degeneration," Problems of Communism (January/February, 1966). Reprinted in Dilemmas of Change in Soviet Politics, ed. Z. Brzezinski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 10.

[85] Ibid., 26.

> edifice, but inside there develops an emptiness and the corrosive feeling that the structure of power no longer has any justification and legitimacy.[86]

But as the sixties came to and end, and a new decade got underway without a sign that communism would disappear in the Soviet Union, Brzezinski was forced to account for its staying power.

In 1973 he advanced an argument that the "waning of the ideological fervour" in the Soviet Union was balanced

> by a marked growth, especially within the ruling elite, of a nationalist big power sentiment and an intense desire to see the Soviet Union recognized as a pre-eminent global power...[And that] the concept of the world revolution was overshadowed by the more tangible immediate identification with state nationalism.[87]

It was only a small step from the above argument for Brzezinski to embrace ideas which he criticized in 1962 as based on "ignorance."[88] That is, the argument that Soviet foreign policy was basically a continuation of the old Great Russian imperialism. Somewhere in the period from the early 1960 to the mid-1960s, we can detect a shift in Brzezinski's thinking, one that drew him away from seeing ideology (i.e.

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[86] Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Block: Unity and Conflict, revised and expanded ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 511.

[87] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "U.S.-Soviet Relations," in The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy, 2d ed., ed. Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederick J. Fleron, Jr. (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1980.), 319.

[88] Ideology and Power, 98.

official Marxism-Leninism) as a way of explaining Soviet foreign policy, toward a position more in line with the writers considered here. He appears to have shifted to a realist position, one that locates basic motivations in nationalism translated again as preservation of the Great Power status.

JERRY HOUGH AND GENERATIONAL SUCCESSION

In 1985, the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East held a hearing on Soviet leadership succession.[89] The hearing was conducted to gain insight into the short term and long term implications of Gorbachev's accession to power. In particular, the Congressmen wanted to know "what kinds of policies and policy changes might [be expected] from Gorbachev in foreign affairs, defence spending, economic reform, and the question of human rights."[90]

Jerry Hough was one of several scholars who testified in front of this Subcommittee. He raised the question of whether the cause of Soviet stagnation in the early 1980s was "systemic, historical, ideological, bureaucratic, or generational."[91]

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[89] Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Soviet Succession: Implications for U.S. Policy. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1 April 1985.

[90] Ibid., 1.

[91] Ibid., 2.

Professor Hough argued that if the cause of Soviet problems was systemic, then "relatively little" change would take place. If, however, the cause of stagnation was generational, that is, ossification of the top leadership, then rapid change could take place.[92]

Early in his presentation Hough asserted that the causes of Soviet stagnation were not systemic. In his written submission to the hearing, he further emphasised the point:

> To repeat, I think that the set of assumptions behind the systemic stagnation assumption represent real wishful thinking. If I were not in the solemn setting of a Congressional hearing, I would say that they are nonsense."[93]

Hough's claim, that relatively little could be changed if the cause of the stagnation was systemic, rested on his belief in the stability of the Soviet Communist system. He felt that the system would prevail over anyone attempting to tinker with it. Ultimately, this argument was tied to Hough's ideas about the legitimacy of the Soviet government and its foreign policy conduct.

In his analysis of the Bolshevik revolution, Hough rejected the commonly-held belief among Western scholars of the Soviet Union, that the Bolsheviks seized power in a coup d'etat.[94]

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., 10.

[94] Jerry Hough, Russia and the West: Gorbachev and the Politics of Reform (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1988), 49.

In a 1988 book, Hough argued that Lenin and his party gained power in a genuine revolution which was fuelled by Russian resentment of anything Western.

> To a Russian audience, Leninism represented a repudiation of the institutions and values of Western-Europe and, of course, of the Westernized elite that was ruling Russia.[95]

Hough also added,

> Lenin's program - and even more the form of Communism that developed under Stalin - provided a simple answer and a sense of certainty that insecure people were craving, and in a direction that corresponded to the communal values they had known in the collective village mir.[96]

Hough concluded that from the very beginning, the Bolshevik Revolution was aligned with the values which were already present among the Russian masses. Further to this he added that even before the revolution, Communist leaders such as Josef Stalin spoke as Russian nationalists.[97]

Identification with Russian Nationalism, argued Hough, provided the Soviet regime with stability because "the party [had] successfully identified itself with the goals of national defense [and] national power."[98]

Hough felt that many of the humiliations suffered by Russia prior to the revolution, such as the loss of the

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[95] Ibid., 50.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 55.

[98] Jerry Hough, "Gorbachev's Strategy," Foreign Affairs 64 (Fall 1985), 39.

Crimean War, or the Russo-Japanese war, were redressed by the Russian victory in W.W. II and the subsequent rise of the U.S.S.R. as a super-power.[99]

He went on to argue that Russian nationalism provided a solid foundation for the Soviet system of government. This made it immune to some of the dangers faced by other communist states. For example, despite the fact the internal economic problems of Poland and the U.S.S.R. were quite similar in the early 1980s, Hough argued in 1982, that the two states would not face the same outcome. Referring to the rise of Solidarity and its challenge to the Communist regime, he asserted that

> if demonstrations and strikes occur in the Soviet Union - which is certainly possible - they are likely to be more similar to those that have occurred in the United States in recent decades than to those in Poland.[100]

One aspect of Hough's early 1980s analysis of the Soviet Union is clear. While he recognized the country was in a state of economic stagnation, he did not think it was about to enter into any deep crisis.

Hough rejected the argument that the stagnation was systemically caused. Instead, he asserted that the problem could be explained by the slow turnover (or non-turnover) of

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[99] Jerry Hough, The Polish Crisis: American Policy Options (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 67. See also Jerry Hough, Soviet Leadership in Transition (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1980), 166.

[100] Jerry Hough, The Polish Crisis, 68.

the top leadership, or as Hough called it, the "generational cause".

Writing in 1987, Hough laid out his argument as follows:

> The problem in the Soviet Union in the last decade has not been an overpowering dictator who lashes out at the elite and society on the basis of his dogmatic ideology, but leaders who will not take strong action on any basis, who do not know what they want to do or are afraid to act.[101]

Since the Brezhnev leadership was so conservative, Hough stated in 1980 that "a generational change within the Politburo - regardless of the policy perspectives of the new leaders - is likely to bring about a more activist and innovative foreign policy."[102] He also believed that any leadership would have to uphold "the values of national dignity and power."[103] The last assertion is consistent with Hough's belief about the role and nature of Russian nationalism and its impact on the communist system and its policies.

Hough's analysis of Gorbachev's succession and its implications for the East - West conflict are consistent with the parameters laid out in his analysis of the Soviet Union in general. He believed the Communist regime internalized, and

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[101] Jerry Hough, "The 'X' Article and Contemporary Sources of Soviet Conduct," in Containing the Soviet Union: A Critique of U.S. Policy, ed. Terry L. Deibel and John Lewis Gaddis (London: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1987), 146.

[102] Jerry Hough, Soviet Leadership, 166.

[103] Ibid.

expressed, values which were present in Russia prior to the revolution. This provided the regime with long lasting legitimacy and stability. Any ideas about the collapse of the system, argued Hough, were based on "wishful thinking."[104]

Hough re-emphasized his belief in the importance of Russian nationalism when he argued the most logical route Gorbachev could take to promote economic reform was to stress the external threat to the Soviet Union.[105] This threat was long range and was based on the steadily widening technological gap between the United States and the U.S.S.R. Hough did not believe the causes for economic stagnation were systemic. Consequently, he could not hold that the causes for the technological gap were systemic. Therefore, he had no reason to believe that Gorbachev would not be able to bring about the necessary changes.[106]

Hough did not believe that anything could alter the nature of the East -West conflict. When asked to describe the Soviet Union in 1985, he stated that it was "naturally expansionist, naturally opportunistic and naturally

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[104] Jerry Hough, The Polish Crisis, 4.

[105] Hough stressed this point on several occasions: "Gorbachev Strategy," Op. Cit., 40-7. Congress, op.cit., 10-13. And in "Soviet Decision-Making on Defense," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 41 (August 1985): 88.

[106] Congress, Op. Cit., 21.

defensive".[107] He added that the same held true for the United States. Further, in 1987 he stated:

> Even if Russia became democratic or America Communist, the relationship between the two superpowers would likely remain one of conflict at least until sometime in the twenty-first or twenty-second century when countries such as China, India, and Brazil become superpowers leading to new alignments.[108]

Keeping in mind Hough's assertion that the Soviet Union was "naturally expansionist," it is easy to see why he would argue that many of the Soviet policies, such as their control of Eastern Europe for instance, were not dependent on the internal developments in the U.S.S.R.

CONCLUSION

As has been pointed out, all four of the scholars in question had trouble accepting the possibility that a Soviet leader could do away with Russian dominance over Eastern Europe. They argued on the one hand that this could not happen, while on the other, they pointed to very important changes which were taking place in the Soviet Union itself. Thus, they conveniently separated the changes which were taking place in the U.S.S.R. from many important questions regarding Soviet external behaviour.

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[107] Ibid., 54-55.

[108] Jerry Hough, "The 'X' Article and Contemporary Sources, 147.

In 1989 Kennan went as far as to argue that the East European states were essentially free, as long as they did not leave the Warsaw Pact. That is, they were free as long as they dispensed with the outdated and anachronistic ideas about the nature of sovereignty. But he did not apply the same standard to the Soviet Union which, by the virtue of its Great Power status, was free to protect its own sovereignty. In any case, while Kennan was developing his ideas on the orderly transformation of the Eastern European order,[109] unruly and unpredicted events took care of themselves.

Initially, Seweryn Bialer appeared to be departing from Kennan's straight historical analysis in a search for some type of synthesis between communist ideology and Russian nationalism. By combining the ideology with Russian nationalism, he came up with what he called "Soviet nationalism." But the exercise, upon closer scrutiny, turns out to be an empty gesture. This is so because before he added the ideology to the Russian nationalism, he robbed the former of all meaningful content. Upon close scrutiny Soviet nationalism turns out to be no different from Kennan's explanation of Russian nationalism.

The history of Zbigniew Brzezinski's ideas on Soviet behaviour is quite interesting. On the one hand, he can be

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[109] Kennan informed the Senators on April 4, 1989 that he had written a paper on the question of German reunification which was going into publication in German and American journals (Senate Testimony, 25).

credited with a long held view that internal Soviet politics were in a state of irreversible degeneration. On the other hand, he believed that Soviet external behaviour was separated from the country's internal troubles. Contrary to some claims, Brzezinski did not foresee the collapse of the communism in Eastern Europe. On the contrary, he argued until quite late that the Soviet Union could not afford to undermine its geopolitical position by letting the East Europeans go their own way.

Jerry Hough develops his argument, as George Breslauer points out, to counter Brzezinski's "systemic degeneration" thesis.[110] It is quite interesting to see that Brzezinski and Hough have a meeting of minds on the question of Soviet foreign policy vis-a-vis Eastern Europe. They came to the same conclusion because both authors saw Russian nationalism as a powerful force in Soviet politics.

All of the authors considered in this study, and many more who were left out for reasons of space, saw Russian nationalism in terms of defense of national power. Their analysis was widely accepted as inherently sound and guided our thinking on the matter for many years.

These scholars had tremendous impact not only on students of Soviet affairs, but also on American policy makers. For instance, when asked by Macleans magazine what he

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[110] George W. Breslauer, Five Images of Soviet Future: a Critical Review and Synthesis (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1978), 1, 10-22.

would tell the American administration about the Soviet succession, should he be given an opportunity, Brzezinski quickly volunteered that he had already been consulted.[111] These were the people to whom American policy makers turned for analysis and advice; their books were read in Washington, some even worked there occasionally, they were invited to high-level seminars and to testify at Congressional hearings. Were their counsels adequate to the times and to the task? Given the magnitude of the impact that these scholars had on the policies of a great state, their ideas do deserve the close scrutiny given them here.

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[111] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Unalterable East-West Reality," interview by David North, Macleans, 20 February 1984, 26.

II. REALISM: THE LEADING PARADIGM

The purpose of the present chapter is to illustrate that while the success of Realism as a theory of international relations is understandable, it is also problematic. It will be shown that the attraction of the theory stems from its ability to explain complex international behaviour in terms which are easily accessible to the participants. For instance, words like power and security were widely used in public discussion after WWII and were immediately accepted as terms with great importance. There was never any doubt among people in government, or people at large, just what these words meant. Realist vocabulary passed freely and with ease into the realm of public discourse, and especially among foreign policy making establishment. The fact that these terms had such clearly identifiable referents probably helps to explain the continuing appeal of realism among politicians and popular writers.

But the appeal of Realism, as it developed in North America since the last World War, is based as much on seduction as on reality. Although Realism should not be confused with terms like "reality" and "realistic," it also cannot be too far removed from them. To appreciate this point, one needs only turn to the teachings of Niccolo Machiavelli, one of the founders of the Realist tradition. Writing in The Prince, Machiavelli stated that

> since I intend to write something useful to an understanding reader, it seemed better to go after the real truth of the matter than to repeat what people have imagined. A great many men have imagined states and princedoms such as nobody ever saw or knew in the real world, for there's such a difference between the way we really live and the way we ought to live that the man who neglects the real to study the ideal will learn to accomplish his ruin, not his salvation.[1]

Many of the ideas contained in the above passage will reappear throughout the chapter. What is important is Machiavelli's admonition to write about the "real" world and not an imaginary one.

Since Machiavelli, writing about the "real" world has acquired its own grammar and, as already mentioned, its own vocabulary.[2] Alan James makes a useful observation, in this regard, by pointing to two kinds of Realism. One is the "small-r-realism" of the early writers of this tradition. Here James is referring to the writings done immediately following W.W.II. These writers took

> the admirable view that the job of the scholar was to take a long hard look at the relations of the states, and provide a truthful report, warts and all. In a word, they were realists, what they therefore offered was realism.[3]

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[1] Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, translated and edited by Robert Adams (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), 44.

[2] The vocabulary and the grammar is the language, and the manner of speaking, in which realism explains the world.

[3] Alan James, "The realism of Realism: the State and the study of International Relations," in Review of International Studies 15 (July 1989): 216.

That was the time of "small-r-realism" and, writes James, "there was no necessity for its status to change."[4]

But its status did change. With the passage of time, as people discussed over and over these views of the real world, some of the terms and concepts were codified and acquired new and concrete definitions and meanings. What we see is a transformation of small-r-realism into large-r-Realism which became, according to James, "something other than [to] identify a realistic approach." He explains that

> "small-r-realism is not a necessary ingredient of large-r-Realism, and there is no reason why it should be. For the purpose of large-r-Realism is to designate a particular type of approach rather than to vouch for its accuracy. It is the school which is referred to, not the quality of its work.[5]

Now, James is not offering this explanation as a criticism of the writers of Realism.[6] There is no reason per se to fault this shift in usage or this natural growth of language.

However, it can be argued that as the refinement and codification occurred, a certain hardening, or inflexibility, or even laziness, crept into the writings of scholars in the field. The theory and the vocabulary seemed to cover the field so well that the need to think hard about the material may have receded somewhat.

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 215.

[6] Ibid., 216ff.

In addition to this, Realists embraced the Machiavellian dictum that it is the duty of a good man "to pass on his knowledge to others...[who] will put it in effect."[7] The Realists sought to educate those in power and in this, they were singularly successful.

In short, Realism became the dominant, and very popular, mode of explanation in the post-WWII years, and the task set forth in this chapter is to appreciate its hold on the thinking of people taking part in and writing about East-West relations during that time.

In order to appreciate the appeal of realism, one must realize the enormity of the subject it addresses. Attention must also be given to some of the difficulties faced by the scholars who theorize about international relations.

The first part of this chapter will discuss briefly what is known in the field as the level-of-analysis problem. This appears as a digression from a discussion of Realism, since the "level-of analysis problem" may be regarded as a competing theoretical approach not related to the latter. However, by considering the issues dealt with within the levels-of-analysis framework one can develop an appreciation for the simplifying force of Realism itself. Following this, the discussion will turn to a short history of the field, with an emphasis on its interdisciplinary roots. Next, I will comment

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[7] Niccolo Machiavelli, Discourses on the First Decade of Livy's History, in The Prince and other Writings, translated by Bruce Penman (London: Everyman's Library, 1981), 227-28.

on the search for a "scientific" theory of international relations, the so called behavioral period. Again, this will not only review an important part of the field's history, but will also underline the staying power of Realism.

That will bring the discussion back to Realism, which will then be scrutinized in much more detail. I will focus on the strengths of the theory, but also point to certain areas which need to be re-examined. Special attention will be given to what I call "rigidity," which leads in turn to theoretical laziness. By this I mean the work of scholars who refuse to consider that the world may be different from what they think it is.

THE LEVEL-OF-ANALYSIS PROBLEM

As much as any other student of society, the international relations specialist is faced with a multiplicity of issues which call for his or her attention. When confronting the number and the type of interactions which take place among the various states in the international arena, the student must make decisions about what is important and what is not. A decision must also be made on a starting point. This underlies one of the fundamental problems in the study of international relation: the level, or unit, of analysis. To put this as a simple question, what should be the focus of a scholar's analysis as he explains the action of states vis-a-vis other states? The level-of-analysis question

deals with the prism through which the scholar views international relations.

Kenneth Waltz addresses this problem in his 1954 book, Man, the State and War.[8] In this undertaking, Waltz examines the work of a diverse number of political theorists in a search for the causes of war. He discovers three different "images" which may account for its persistence. Wars may occur due to the nature of man; the nature of the state; or the nature of the international system. Though his "images" appear neat, they are, in fact, not. Waltz points out that "views comprised by any one image may in some senses be as contradictory as are different images inter se.

> The argument that war is inevitable because men are irrevocably bad, and the argument that wars can be changed, are contradictory; but since in each of them individuals are taken to be the locus of cause, both are included in the first image.[9]

Waltz concludes his book by stating that no "single image is ever adequate" when searching for the causes of war.

David Singer, writing in 1961, addressed this question directly in his essay "The Level-of-Analysis Problem In International Relations."[10] He singles out two levels: systemic and national. Singer argues that, depending on the

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[8] Kenneth N. Waltz, Man, The State and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954, 1967).

[9] Ibid., 12-13.

[10] J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," in The International System: Theoretical Essays, ed. Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, 77-92 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

intention of the research, a scholar may choose either of the levels for the purpose of analysis. However, one level is not intrinsically better than another.

> So the problem is really not one of deciding which level is most valuable to the discipline as a whole and then demanding that it be adhered to from now unto eternity. Rather, it is one of realizing that there is this preliminary conceptual issue and that it must be resolved prior to any given research undertaking.[11]

The most important aspect of the level-of-analysis problem, according to Singer, is for us to be aware of the level which we choose, and to avoid "shifting our orientation in the midst of a study."[12]

Singer seems to have simplified his level-of-analysis prism by removing the man from the array. Instead, he engages in a kind of anthropomorphism in describing the "national level". On this level, he speaks of "nation-as-actor model". This is further simplified when Singer starts using only the term "actor". He talks about the perception of the actor and other psychological phenomena. Also, he jumps back and forth between the group and the individual, but in the end, it is clear that by "actor" he really means nation state.[13] What Singer is doing here is engaging in a common kind of anthropomorphism insofar as he endows the state with the qualities of an individual human. The substitution can also be

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[11] Ibid., 90.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 85-87.

looked at as an example of the pathetic fallacy. Whatever it is called, the problem is not serious as long as one understands that a shorthand is being employed.

Peter Gourevitch widened the level-of-analysis question considerably with the publication of his essay "The second image reversed: the international source of domestic politics."[14] The first part of the essay discusses what the title suggests, the impact of the international system on domestic behaviour.

In the second part, and this is of more interest to us, Gourevitch explores the impact of domestic structures on the international behaviour of states. He does not argue that the structures determine policies. On the contrary, policy making is still left to the political process. Therefore,

> the impact of structures lies not in some inherent, self-contained quality, but rather in the way a given structure at specific historical moments helps one set of opinions prevail over another.[15]

In this argument, the internal structures of the states become units for analysis. But it is important to keep in mind that Gourevitch does not put structures ahead of the political processes. The structures are created through politics and may be altered by them.

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[14] Peter Gourevitch, "The second image reversed: the international sources of domestic politics," in International Organization 32 (Autumn 1978): 881-911.

[15] Ibid., 904.

Gourevitch's argument is reminiscent of Graham Allison's discussion of policy formation in his widely read study, The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis.[16] In this book, Allison develops three models: "The Rational Actor Model" (Model I), "Organizational Process Model" (Model II), and "The Governmental Bureaucratic Politics Model" (Model III). Model I is the traditional approach in which the policy-making process is seen as the result of "more or less purposive acts of unified national governments." In Model II, Allison explores the impact on policy of "the processes and procedures of the large organizations that constitute a government." In Model III, the policy choice "is the resultant of various bargaining games among players in the national government."

The question raised by the level-of-analysis problem does not confront us with a choice between a right and wrong approach; rather, it is simply a caution to be aware of a certain range of concerns in analysis. First of all, the levels extend vertically from the individual to the state to the international system; second, there is the question of interaction between domestic and foreign policies. This list is not exhaustive, one can add international organizations or multinational corporations as additional units. However, by

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[16] Graham Allison, The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 1-9.

looking at everything there is the risk of trivializing the analysis.

The importance of raising this problem in the present chapter is to illustrate the multiplicity of issues which vie for the attention of an analyst devising a theoretical explanation of international relations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Even if the student of international relations resolves, or at least acknowledges, the level-of-analysis problem, he or she is still left with a multitude of questions which no one academic discipline can deal with adequately. Hence, the student must draw on the expertise of a variety of fields. In the not too distant past, the disciplines to which the student most frequently turned were history, philosophy, and law. The are many reasons why these fields were (and are) important for anyone theorizing about the nature of international politics, but one reason is especially important.

Until quite recently international relations did not exist as a separate academic field. Before the last World War, most of what was written on the subject was done by philosophers, historians and international lawyers. There are many names which come to mind: Hobbes, Machiavelli, Thucydides, Ranke, Grotius, Vattel and many more.

But one must be careful when drawing on these sources. While K. J. Holsti does so cautiously, he is wrong to group

together as international theorists men such as Rousseau, David Singer, Hobbes, Ernst Haas, Hans Morgenthau, and others.[17] While thinkers like Rousseau and Hobbes contributed greatly to the development of thought on international relations, this was done, as Martin Wight points out, "at the margin of their activities."[18]

The principal concerns of the great political thinkers were the questions dealing with social order and good government. Martin Wight calls our attention to the fact that

> [s]ince the society of states came into recognizable existence in the sixteenth century, the three most powerful influences on its development have been the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the French Revolution, and the totalitarian revolutions of the twentieth century.[19]

In each case, battles were fought between the adherents of the various social movements. It was in the midst of this conflict of ideas that first thoughts were formulated on the nature of international relations.

Hence, one must be careful and consider the work of a Hobbes or a Rousseau as a whole before citing a name to support some theoretical position. The importance of this

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[17] K. J. Holsti, The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Relations (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985), intro. and chap.I.

[18] Martin Wight, "Why Is There No International Theory?," in Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Relations, ed. Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 19.

[19] Ibid.,24

point will become evident when we consider how our traditional approach to international relations became separated from thought on domestic politics.

The traditional approach, with its emphasis on history, philosophy and law was eventually deemed inadequate for the purpose of building a scientific theory of international relations. The non-cumulative nature of work done up to that time alarmed some scholars, who, at any case, felt the pull of the Behavioral Revolution which was sweeping through the social sciences. This was combined with the appeal of systems theory which was slowly making inroads into political science.

In 1953 David Easton published his seminal work entitled The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science.[20] The book was an introduction to the application of "systems" methods into analysis of politics as well as an open challenge to other political scientists to become more scientific. The combined effect of behaviorism and the possibilities of the "systems" approach contributed to an enthusiasm about a prospect of a cumulative research that would lead to the scientific breakthrough in the field.

This formed the basis for an assault on the traditional approach.

> Where the theorists of realism [traditionalists] relied on a few simple concepts, the

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[20] David Easton, The Political System - An Inquiry into the State of Political Science (New York: Knopf, 1953).

> behavioralists shared the common epistemological assumption that the complex data of the field could be explained by reference to a single theory - a general theory.[21]

Relying on "scientifically precise procedures," and on data processing methods that developed from punched cards to computers, much energy was expended on a search for such a "general theory." But by the early 1970s this route was pretty much abandoned, as the entire behavioral movement began to lose its hold on the discipline. The approach was severely criticized for

> (a) cultivating theory at the expense of philosophy; (b) engaging in data collection at the expense of analysis; and (c) practicing quantification at the expense of meaning.[22]

The charges were severe and may have tempered the enthusiasm of some of those who wanted to bring more science into the study of international relations.

But while some may have been discouraged by the demise of the Behavioral Revolution, others tried to salvage what they could. Part of the problem with behaviorism and its applicability to the study of international politics was the approach "indicated that [the] scientific method should be applied to micro-level of analysis" and, therefore, it was not

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[21] F. Parkinson, The Philosophy of International Relations: A Study in the History of Thought (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), 188.

[22] Ibid., 192.

very suitable for work on interstate relations.[23]

However, the systems approach seemed to solve this problem:

> The introduction of a systems approach represented an attempt to refocus attention on the complex international interactions between states, while retaining the scientific orientation propounded by behavioralism.[24]

The application of the systems approach survived the demise of behaviorism and, through the work of writers like Morton Kaplan and, lately, Kenneth Waltz, it continues to exert some influence on the field.[25]

Richard Little, writing about the systems literature, states that

> [d]espite its association with an apparently clearly defined movement in the natural sciences, it is not possible to provide a coherent and unambiguous statement about the essential characteristics of the approach.[26]

What identifies systems analysts is their conviction that "all areas of knowledge can be examined from a systems perspective." This means that to understand a "unit's"

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[23] Richard Little, "A Systems Approach" in Approaches and Theory in International Relations, ed. Trevor Taylor (London: Longman, 1978), 183.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Morton Kaplan, System and Process in International Politics (New York: Wiley, 1957); Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979). Although Waltz criticizes Kaplan's approach vigorously and cannot be seen as continuing the latter's work (pp.50-59) they both share the desire to explain international behaviour in terms of structural influences.

[26] Richard Little, "A Systems Approach," 187.

behaviour, be it an organ of a human body, i.e. a heart, or a single person, "the explanation is always formulated at a higher level of analysis."[27]

In international relations, the systems approach generally rejects what Kenneth Waltz calls "reductionism," that is, the attempt to explain the complex interstate relations by focusing on the individual or the nation as the unit of analysis.[28] The proper level-of-analysis, therefore, is the state system of which the individual nations are members.

Although many writers attempted to explain international behaviour using the "scientific" systems approach, as Hedley Bull pointed out, these efforts have not displaced the traditional approach.[29]

In their magisterial survey of the field, James Dougherty and Robert Pfalzgraff state that since the beginning of the twentieth century

> the study of international relations has passed through three stages which may be characterized as utopian, realist, and behavioral, or stated differently, normative, empirical-normative and

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[27] Ibid., 188.

[28] Waltz (1979), 18.

[29] Hedley Bull, "International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach," in Contending Approaches to International Politics, ed. Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 26.

behavioral-quantitative.[30]

They also state that the field is now in the post-behavioral stage.

But while the field was passing through its various stages, there is little evidence that the influence enjoyed by the traditional Realist approach was really affected.

The reason for this is that the real debate throughout this time has always been the one between Realism and idealism. Other voices tried to join in this debate, as the title of a 1966 essay by Morton Kaplan suggests, "The New Great Debate: Traditionalism vs. Science in International Relations,"[31] but this encroachment was premature.

There were many reasons for this. One is that the complexity and the number of variables, which go into the making of international relations, are perhaps beyond the scope of a truly "scientific" explanation. After all, how do we develop a theory of unpredictable behaviour, asks Stanley Hoffmann in his critique of the search for a general theory.[32]

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[30] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comparative Survey, 2d. ed. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), 543.

[31] Morton Kaplan, "The New Great Debate: Traditionalism vs. Science of International Relations," in Contending Approaches to International Politics, ed. Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

[32] Stanley Hoffmann, Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 15.

Another reason why the "scientific" approach did not make its voice heard in the Great Debate was that it found no resonance within the larger community of scholars and policy-makers. Realism and idealism, on the other hand, had no shortage of partisans.

This brief account of the discipline's recent history is not intended, of course, to be exhaustive. But it does illustrate some of the range and depth of problems that arise in the field. At this point we turn back to what has been an abiding and central issue, the great debate between Realism and idealism.

THE GREAT DEBATE

The Realist paradigm of international relations is generally seen as a critical reaction to the idealism of the interwar period. This said, it is also true that the debate between Realism and idealism has a very long history. It has always existed between those who believe in the perfectibility of man, and those who see him condemned to an eternal tragic existence.

The trauma of World War I had a profound impact on those who experienced it. It was dubbed as the war to end all wars and many sought to bring about the ideal eternal peace in its aftermath. Out of "the wreck of Versailles," writes Michael Howard, arose

> the League of Nations, whose Covenant embodied all the aspirations of lovers of peace for the

past two hundred years.[33]

The League was to be the cornerstone of a new international order and, as such, had the support of the majority of liberal opinion. But as history records, the new international order never arrived.

As World War II approached, the League was quickly losing its relevance. E.H. Carr, who became one of the founders of the new Realist tradition, noted

> [t]he fact that the Utopian dishes prepared during these years at Geneva proved unpalatable to most of the principal governments concerned was a symptom of growing divorce between theory and practice.[34]

Carr also argued that there was a "rift between the theory of the intellectuals and the practice of the government."[35]

The intellectuals, loosely identified as idealists, were men like Sir Alfred Zimmerman, David Mitrany, James T. Shotwell, and many others. Hedley Bull explains -

> The distinctive characteristic of these writers was their belief in progress: the belief, in particular, that the system of international relations that had given rise to the First World War was capable of being transformed into a fundamentally more peaceful and

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[33] Michael Howard, War and the Liberal Conscience (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978, 1986), 85.

[34] E.H. Carr, The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919 - 1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1946; Papermacs: 1984).

[35] Ibid., 29. See footnote #2.

just world order.[36]

Their hopes were dashed by W.W.II.

Following the war, the mood of many intellectuals changed. Like many great European cities, their aspirations for a brave new world went up in flames. The desire was to make some sense of the tragedy. Men like Carr and Morgenthau rebelled against what they thought was political ignorance and naivety of international relations analysis in the interwar period, and they were determined not to waste their time in pursuit of some imaginary world. Instead, the task which they set for themselves was to educate the public, and (especially) the policymakers, about the realities of the world around them.[37] What they saw was conflict and this became one of the central preoccupations of the Realist tradition they started. This came out of the recognition that states exist in a type of international anarchy[38] in which self-help meant being able to rely on their own resources in order to protect their activities.

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[36] Hedley Bull, "Theory of International Politics: 1919 - 1969," in The Aberystwyth Papers. International Politics: 1919 - 1969, ed. Brian Porter (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 34.

[37] Stanley Hoffmann, Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 9-10.

[38] This does not imply total anarchy, as even in the darkest moments of the last two world wars some international rules were followed by the belligerent.

From this, the Realists hold that conflict, or a potential for conflict, is always present as an element of relations between states. Since it cannot be eliminated, it must be understood and managed. Morgenthau, writing in what became the seminal work of the new Realist tradition, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, counterposes his approach to that of idealism in the following manner:

> It [Realism] appeals to historic precedent rather than to abstract principles, and aims to lesser evil rather than the absolute good.[39]

Hence, the approach is to empirically examine the world, as well as the recorded historical experience, and make a positive contribution to the political process. That is, to provide analytical tools for statesmen who are striving to preserve peace.

Yet, for all its appeal to objectivity and empirical observation, Realism shares some common features with the idealism against which it rebelled. Both post W.W.I idealism and post W.W.II Realism came to us by way of human tragedy. If idealism of the interwar period fell victim to the realities of power, the Realist response overemphasized the importance of power in the behaviour of states.

Although the Realist argument assumes different shades among many of its exponents, there is a general agreement

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[39] Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 4.

about what may be called "politics of security."[40] Or to put it differently, "politics of survival." Above all, the Realists agree that the states must ensure their own survival before an argument can be made about some other goals. This is a common sense argument and does not need to be disputed; however, by itself it does not constitute an adequate explanation of state behaviour.

The focus and "political survival" leads Realism to what Brian Porter describes as a "preoccupation with power for its own sake."[41] Morgenthau attempts to make a distinction between "the ultimate goals of political action" and the pursuit of power. But his conclusion that "true nature of policy is concealed by ideological justification and rationalization" assigns the ultimate goals at best a secondary importance.[42] The position that ideology is of little help when one strives to uncover the true forces which move international relations stems from Realism's original disdain for idealism in general.

The important part of Realism's belief about the prevalence of conflict in interstate relations stems from its

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[40] Trevor Taylor, "Power Politics: Origins and Scholars," in Approaches and Theory in International Relations, ed. T. Taylor (London: Longman, 1978), 127-28.

[41] Brian Porter, "Patterns of Thought and Practice: Martin's Wight's International Theory," in The Reasons of States: A Study of International Political Theory, ed. Michael Donnelan (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978), 65.

[42] Morgenthau, Politics, 90-1.

pessimistic view of human nature. Morgenthau opens his book with a claim that "the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature."[43] Man is essentially selfish. In this, Realists follow another of Machiavelli's dictums: "our desires are insatiable because nature has enabled us to wish for all things, whereas Fortune enables us to obtain a small part of them."[44]

But it is not enough to assign the causes of war to some flaw of human character. Martin Wight, writing about the Hobbesian state of nature states that

> He [Hobbes] describes the state of nature, when men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, as a condition of war of everyman against everyman; and forestalling the argument that such a condition never existed, he points to the relations of sovereign states as exemplifying it.[45]

The same is true in the relations among states. The idea that it is a conflict of all against all finds no support in historical experience.

Realism, with its emphasis on conflict, may have turned our attention away from the study of peace. The argument is not to pursue some project for the construction of peace, as

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[43] Morgenthau, Politics, 3.

[44] Machiavelli, Discourses, 227.

[45] Martin Wight, "Why is There no Theory of International Relations," 31.

in the work of the interwar idealists.[45] Rather, attention must be on a realistic study of peace. Writing in Peace and War, Raymond Aron tells us that "true realism takes into account the whole of reality."[47] If peace is part of reality, it deserves the same rigorous analysis as war.

In The Causes of War, Michael Howard argues when it comes to the problems of war and peace, the questions about peace are of more interest to historians. Howard, speaking of war -

> The breakdown of international order does not, on the whole, strike us as pathological aberration from the norm. On the contrary, the maintenance of that order and its peaceful adjustment to changing circumstances appears as a task presenting a continued challenge to human ingenuity.[48]

Howard does not offer this as a criticism of Realists. Realism, in fact, does study the methods which are most useful in keeping peace, i.e. the balance of power. However, he does point to the challenge of understanding peace.

The fact is, peace is as much a part of international life as conflict. Realism answers this challenge to one of its central premises by pointing to the ever present potential for conflict. Note that the stress here is on the possibility of

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[46] One can mention today's peace studies.....

[47] Raymond Aron, Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations, translated by Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox (New York: Preager, 1968), 600.

[48] Michael Howard, The Causes of War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 8.

hostilities. However, the likelihood of some states going to war with each other is small.

To clarify this point, let us consider an important argument about war by Michael Doyle. According to his analysis

> neither the logic of the balance of power nor the logic of international harmony explains the separate peace maintained for more than 150 years among states with one particular form of governance - liberal principles and institutions.[49]

The above, as Doyle argues elsewhere, does not mean that liberal states are "inherently peace loving."[50] On the contrary, when aroused, liberal democratic states are capable of extreme violence. The crucial point of Doyle's argument revolves around the question of whom the liberal democracies fight.

After a survey[51] of wars fought in the past 150 years, Doyle asserts -

> Even though liberal states have become involved in numerous wars with non-liberal states, constitutionally secure states have yet to engage in war with one another.[52]

Doyle's research and argument raise some very important questions regarding the commonly held view about the anarchic nature of the international state system.

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[49] Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," American Political Science Review 80 (1983) 1157.

[50] Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs," Philosophy and Public Affairs 12 (1983), 206.

[51] Ibid., 209-12, 214-15.

[52] Ibid., 213.

Alan James has pointed out that Realism has provided us with a view of the world which emphasizes certain points: "The state as the most important actor, distinction of domestic and international politics, [and that] international relations [are] the struggle for power and peace."[53] This has been a powerful glass through which generations of important people have viewed the world, but at times we have to smear or smudge the clear image to some extent. As we have just seen in the materials from Hobbes to Doyle, the international world is not exactly a war of all against all, and certain secure states have lived without war over long periods of time. The point is that this marvelous lens of realism can produce distortions.

Domestic and international politics are separated because of the requirements which the international state system places on its member states. In this system, the already mentioned "security politics" takes precedence over all other issues. If a state behaves in a way which does not support this position, a Realist can always answer that those in charge either do not understand the objective interests of the states, or simply misperceive a given situation. So, instead of two different kinds of perceptions, Realists end up with a perception and a misperception. Misperception implies that there is a reality that the actor does not know. He misunderstands it. But the counter-argument is that "reality" is precisely what the actor perceives. In that sense,

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[53] Alan James, "The realism of Realism," 216-17.

misperception is a logical impossibility. Now, this raises a problems for the epistemologist and we will not get into that, but it does illustrate the problem for the Realist.

Taken to an extreme, the position that the international system dictates the state's external behaviour leads to the claim that

> variations in the characteristics of the states are not linked directly to the outcomes that their behaviour produce, nor variations in their pattern of interactions.[54]

In this analysis, the internal differences of the various states play a minimal role in their external behaviour.

This separation of domestic and international politics in the Realist approach is accorded a prominent place in our literature. A recent undergraduate textbook, even if stating that it will examine other approaches, still opens with a claim about a "conceptual distinction between the "high politics of peace and security and low politics of economic and social welfare issues."[55] Michael Smith, in his critique of Realism, argues that "realists tend to regard domestic politics and institutions merely as (somewhat irritating)

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[54] Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory 18 (Spring, 1988): 617.

[55] Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene Wittkopf, World Politics: Trends and Transformations, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 8-9.

variables that affect a state's ability to compete effectively in the international milieu."[56]

Carl von Clausewitz provided an insight on the impact of domestic politics on international structure -

> Clearly the tremendous effect of the French Revolution abroad were caused not so much by new military methods or concepts as by radical change in policies and administration, by the new character of government, altered conditions of the French people, and the like.[57]

Clausewitz, writing at the beginning of the 19th century, showed a clear appreciation for the impact of domestic politics on the international system.

Here we must face one of the key difficulties of Realist thinking that can be traced to the heyday of its development and application. That is, much of this thinking on the international milieu is rooted in the historical record of the 19th century balance of power. Stanley Hoffmann sees the problem as

> [a] paradox of introducing to the America of the cold war, and of making analytically and dogmatically explicit, notions and a "wisdom" about statecraft that had remained largely implicit in the age to which they best applied."[58]

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[56] Michael Joseph Smith, Realist Thought form Weber to Kissinger (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1986), 224.

[57] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Peret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, 1984), 609.

[58] Hoffmann, Janus and Minerva, 7. This line of thought was developed earlier by Raymond Aron in Peace and War where he argued that "In crossing Atlantic, in becoming power

Europe came to be taken as a norm, as fact in the nature of things. But in fact, we had warning from prominent thinkers of that time to remind us that the European system balance of power was a consciously manufactured product built on the ruins of the previously existing "universal" system of the Holy Roman Empire.

For example, Leopold von Ranke, the great 19th century German historian wrote -

> It is not always recognized that European order differs from others which have occurred in world history because of its legal, even juridical nature.[59]

The point which Ranke is making is that the European system was composed of states which were conscious of being members of a special family of nations.

Hedley Bull explains this in the following manner:

> The European system of sovereign states did not arise as a result of the outgrowth and collision of hitherto isolated communities. Its origin lay in the disintegration of a single community: the waning on the one hand of central authorities, and on the other hand of local authorities, within Western Christendom, and the exclusion of both from particular territories by princely powers.[60]

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politics, Treitschke's Macht-politic underwent a chiefly spiritual mutation. It became fact, not value." p.592.

[59] Leopold von Ranke, "The Great Powers," chap. in The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History, trans. and ed. Roger Wines (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), 127.

[60] Hedley Bull, "Society and Anarchy in International Relations," in Diplomatic Investigations (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966), 37.

Clearly, the European 19th century balance of power was not something that came about because of the structure of the order, rather, it was constructed through a deliberate effort of the participants in the arrangement.

The international system that so many Realists write about was constructed by European statesmen who shared some basic beliefs. While the Realists acknowledge the historical position of the balance power system, the implications of this origin are not fully explored.[61] As we recall, Wight argued that the European order was often disturbed by social movements, that is, by the clash of ideologies. This goes beyond an argument that some powers are status quo and some are revisionist.

As Doyle has illustrated, liberal-democratic states, even if no less bellicose than non-liberal states, do not fight each other. This alone calls for a re-examination of some ideas which were dismissed by Realism in the immediate aftermath of the WWII. In its wholesale rejection of idealism, Realism may have inadvertantly discarded an important part of reality.

CONCLUSION

This excursion into some of the strengths and weaknesses of Realism has developed certain lessons to the student who is

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[61] How do we compare the wars of Bismarck and Hitler? Both fought for German grandeur, but Bismarck did not want to destroy the European system at the same time....

looking at the "real" world. It is never out of place to indulge in some introspection, to re-examine the premises of one's argument. It is my contention that over time, a certain divergence between theory and reality made itself evident in the Realist approach to international relations.

One of the troublesome tendencies of Realism is the separation of domestic and international politics. This has profound implications on how we explain the action of states in the international arena. Max Beloff warned us over thirty years ago that this separation might not be fruitful. It is worth recalling what he had to say about the prospects for change in Soviet foreign policy:

> I remain as convinced now [1959] as I was ten years ago that change, if it were to come, could only be the result of important shifts in the social basis and ideological content of the regime itself and for this reason it is Soviet internal development rather than Soviet foreign policy that we should study.[62]

Perhaps Beloff had overstated the point a little, foreign policy cannot be neglected altogether, but the recent event in the former Soviet Union have vindicated his position.

Realism as a theory of international relations enjoyed spectacular success in North America at a time when there was a great need to explain East-West conflict. Out of many ways in which this could have been accomplished, Realism provided

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[62] Max Beloff, The Great Powers: Essays in Twentieth Century Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1959), 14.

explanations which were plausible and appealed to common sense, but in the end, the theory fell victim of its own success. I will close this chapter by pointing to a similar argument made by John Kenneth Galbraith in a recent critique of economics.

Writing about the history of that discipline, Galbraith notes that many economists believe that certain notions of economics "once discovered, are known forever...[and] Such fixed and permanent truths allow economists to view their subject as science."[63]

But Galbraith disagrees. He argues that "economic ideas are always and intimately a product of their own time and place; they cannot be seen apart from the world they interpret."[64] Using examples, such as the theory of wage and the theory of price, Galbraith illustrates that changing circumstances make some of these concepts obsolete. For instance, the theory of wage has little to say about

> management pay, bonuses and perquisites, golden parachutes...These costs are not subject to any minimizing calculation... Although these developments have produced a wide ranging discussion, they have had only marginal effect on established economic theory and instruction.[65]

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[63] John Kenneth Galbraith, Economics in Perspective: A Critical History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 284.

[64] Ibid., 1.

[65] Ibid., 277-78.

The point of Galbraith's argument is that there develops, at a certain time, a divergence between theory and reality, and this gap is sometimes hard to close.

Galbraith's argument about economic theory is very important in light of the esteemed position which economics enjoys within the social sciences. The perceived success of economic theory exerts profound influence on political scientists who try to emulate their apparently more successful colleagues.

The lesson for us is that we must not become complacent with Realism, which is our most successful theory. The theory must grow and be adjusted in order to remain relevant.

III. SOVIET-GERMAN RELATIONS IN THE INTERWAR ERA: A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY

The end of the Second World War saw the crumbling of the European Great Power system and the emergence of a bipolar world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. Henceforth, the confrontation between the two superpowers became the dominant theme in the study of international relations. In North America, as Stanley Hoffmann points out, the theme was narrowed down to the point where "to study United States foreign policy was to study the international system."[1]

Since Realism was firmly established in the United States as a theory of international relations, it is not surprising that many scholars and policymakers saw the world, and especially the Soviet Union, through the prism of this theory.

What Realism taught Americans was that

> Russia is a mammoth power that will not disappear or cease to challenge the United States, regardless of the coloration of its government. The contest for world influence between the United States and Russia is grounded in history - indeed it was foreseen by writers in Europe and America mere than a century ago. Russia will continue to be guided by the pride, ambition, and the interests that have carried over from prerevolutionary times - and no mere

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[1] Stanley Hoffmann, Janus and Minerva (Boulder: Westview Press), 10.

> alteration in regime or ideology will quickly eliminate them.[2]

As stated in chapter one, variations on the above theme were present in the writings of prominent American scholars until 1989. The analysis was largely based on a conviction that ideology, even if important in the immediate post-revolutionary period, had little impact on Soviet foreign policy.

The behaviour of Soviet leadership since 1918 provided Western analysts with many examples where concerns about Realpolitik appeared to take precedence over ideological considerations.

Using interwar Soviet-German relations as a case in point, the present chapter develops the argument that ideology and pragmatism were always present in Soviet external behaviour. While in itself this is not a novel idea, the tendency has always been to concentrate on pragmatism as the motivator behind Soviet action. By separating ideology from the "real" pragmatic behaviour of the Soviet leaders, the Realist approach projected an American image of the world onto Soviet action.

I have chosen to look at German-Soviet relations here because of the important role Germany played in Soviet foreign policy during the interwar period. Also, much of Soviet

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[2] Robert V. Daniels, Russia: The Roots of Confrontation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 358; quoted in Colin S. Gray, The Geopolitics of Super Power (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 3.

behaviour during this time seems to totally disregard the professed ideological commitments to socialist internationalism.

One of the first issues of this chapter concerns the interplay between foreign and domestic policy, where foreign policy is seen to be non-ideological; responding to the hard dictates of the real world. Examples of this down to earth kind of policy are numerous; for instance, Stalin's policies toward the German communists during Hitler's rise to power, or the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939. These examples, and many others, were used in post-war Western analysis of the U.S.S.R. to illustrate a clear separation between Soviet foreign behaviour and its domestic policies.

But I would argue this separation was only apparent. In fact, Soviet Foreign policy, while having considerable freedom of movement, could never entirely abandon its Marxist-Leninist origins and impulses.

Soviet policy relied heavily on these roots, and Western analysts found the matter confusing. First of all, Leninism allowed great tactical latitude to the leadership in the policies they pursued. It was the focus on this pragmatism which led many observers in the post-war period to declare that the Soviets had abandoned their ideological commitments. However, looking closer at the history of the U.S.S.R., one realizes that pragmatism was always part of Leninist ideology and not something which was added on by Lenin's successors.

Therefore, when Stalin or Khrushchev behaved in a manner that resembled a traditional statesman, neither was violating any principles laid down by Lenin.

THE ROOTS OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

There are many reasons why Lenin and his Bolshevik party were able to seize power in 1917.[3] The principle reason was that Lenin, alone among the revolutionary leaders, not only possessed the desire to lead, but also to command a party ready to follow. This vindicated his pre-revolutionary dedication to create a highly centralized and disciplined party of professional revolutionaries. In 1902, he had proposed such an organization in What is to be Done? and had spent years of toil and anguish, as well as all his energy, to create it.

Explaining Lenin's quest for a revolutionary party, Leonard Schapiro argues -

> What was peculiar to Lenin was the fanatical fear which possessed him quite early in his revolutionary career that the revolution might be missed. Hence, his insistence on organization, on discipline, on centralization, on the bringing of consciousness to the workers from the outside and all the familiar features of Lenin's revolutionary doctrine.[4]

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[3] For a convenient summary see Donald W. Treadgold, Twentieth Century Russia, 7th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), chap., 8.

[4] Leonard Schapiro, "Lenin after Fifty Years," in Lenin: The Man, the Theorist, the Leader. A Reappraisal, ed. L. Schapiro and Peter Reddaway (London: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1967), 13.

The thrust of Lenin's desire was to be ready and able to seize a revolutionary situation should such a condition present itself.

While in Geneva in 1915, Lenin published an article called "The Symptoms of a Revolutionary Situation." In it he argued that in order for a revolution to take place, three conditions must be met. First, the ruling class had to find it impossible "to preserve their domination in altered form." That is, the policies of the government would become inadequate to deal with a given situation. Second, "a more than normal aggravation of the want and tribulations of the oppressed classes." And third, "a considerable rise in the level of activity of the masses."[5] In other words, the politicization of the masses, which, according to Lenin, occurs during a crisis situation.

War, he argued further, provided a crisis as well as an opportunity:

> the war experience, like the experience of every crisis in history, every great calamity and every great turning point in man's life, dulls the mind and breaks the spirit of some, but enlightens and tempers others.[6]

In 1917, Lenin was able to take advantage of a crisis brought about by war. But, while revolutionary conditions were ripe in Russia, the situation was not quite the same in the

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[5] Lenin, "The Symptoms of a Revolutionary Situation," in The Lenin Anthology, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1975), 275.

[6] Ibid., 276.

rest of Europe. In Germany, where Lenin expected an early revolution, governmental authority remained intact. Despite the defeat and abdication of the Kaiser, the German bureaucracy carried on. More importantly, its army did not collapse, as was the case in Russia. Demobilization occurred in quite an orderly fashion. Finally, and this became quite significant for the future of Soviet-German relations, the Social Democratic party inspired the politicized workers into participating in democratic activities. These events only reaffirmed Lenin's conviction of the treachery of the German Social Democratic Party, which he saw as betraying the true revolutionary interests of the working masses. Lenin's disgust with the social democrats had a profound effect on the future of Soviet foreign policy.

It can be argued that Lenin's ideas on international relations and foreign policy of a revolutionary state were formed just prior to, and during, the First World War.[7] At this time he was reacting against support of the war by various European social democratic parties, especially the German party. For him, it was a grave betrayal of the Marxist dictum that "the workingmen have no country." He wrote that,

> [t]his betrayal of socialism signified the collapse of the Second (1889-1914) International, and we must realize what caused this collapse, what brought

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[7] Craig Nation, War on War: Lenin, the Zimmerwald Left, and the Origins of Communist Internationalism (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), 33.

social-chauvinism into being and gave it strength.[8] But, as important as the collapse was to Lenin's ideas about social democracy, his opposition to that movement was long-standing and pre-dated this event. It was intransigently connected to his criticism of the so called "opportunism" of many reformist-Marxists affiliated with the organization, people such as Otto Bauer, Ramsey MacDonald, Albert Thomas, as well as others.[9]

In 1896 and 1898 Eduard Bernstein, one of the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, published a series of articles arguing that

> classical Marxism should be revised by abandoning its revolutionary pretenses. The SPD [German Social Democratic Party], he remarked in a phrase that effectively summarized the revisionist outlook, should consent 'to appear what it really is today; a democratic socialist reform party.'[10]

Bernstein's proposal was attacked by his fellow Marxists, but in reality, it was no more than an acknowledgment of the situation in which many, and especially German, socialist parties found themselves. However, a significant number of the party leaders were reluctant to part with the revolutionary

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[8] V. Lenin, "The Principles of Socialism," in The Lenin Anthology, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1975), 192.

[9] V. Lenin. "Revolutionary Politics in a World at War," in The Lenin Anthology, p.208. Note for J.: Check the Collected Works for an earlier criticism of opportunism and social-chauvinism.

[10] Craig Nation, War on War, 11.

dogma, even if they no longer practiced it. The result was, as Craig Nation points out, "the social democratic movement began to fracture openly after 1900."[11] This process continued until the outbreak of the First World War and Lenin's call for a new International, the Third International, in November 1914.[12]

This historical background is vital for an understanding of later Soviet policy vis-a-vis Germany.

SOVIET UNION AND GERMANY

It is interesting that, given Lenin's disdain for the Social Democratic leadership of the German proletariat, he still sincerely believed the Russian revolution would act as a spark for a revolt in Germany.[13] He was aided in this belief by his conviction that the German proletariat was much more revolutionary than its leadership. Writing in April 1917, Lenin concluded that the German proletariat was the "most faithful and reliable ally of the Russian and International proletarian revolution."[14] But, when the Bolsheviks

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[11] Ibid.,12.

[12] Julius Braunthal, History of the International. Volume II: 1914-1943 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 44.

[13] Did Lenin think that, owing to its advanced development, German proletariat would pursue a correct path in a spontaneous action? - Later on he came to realize that even the German proletariat needed a vanguard party.

[14] Cited by Walter Laqueur in Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), 20.

eventually succeeded in gaining power, the German revolution was still nowhere in sight. Instead of welcoming their triumphant German comrades, the Soviets were confronted in 1918 with an advancing German Imperial Army.

At this point, Lenin and his party were forced to make a choice between waging a revolutionary war or suing for immediate peace. After years of advocating the transformation of the imperialist war into a revolutionary war, the Bolsheviks were faced with a real dilemma. Since the Russian armies were destroyed through Bolshevik agitation, there was no way to carry on a war against Germany, even with the best of revolutionary intentions. Lenin chose to sign an onerous peace treaty dictated by the Germans at Brest-Litovsk in March of 1918, and prevailed with his opinion over the rest of the party. Inside his own party, there were many who resisted the treaty because of the following attitude:

> [f]or the advocates of revolutionary war the acceptance of the terms forced upon them by the imperialist Central Powers seemed a betrayal of their duty as revolutionaries.[15]

But Lenin was quick to point out that they had betrayed no one. By signing the treaty the young Soviet state was able to survive in order to carry on a revolutionary mission in the future.[16]

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[15] L. Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 186.

[16] V. Lenin, "The Chief Task of Our Day," in The Lenin Anthology, 435.

This mixture of starkly realist calculation with revolutionary idealism, as demonstrated first at Brest-Litovsk, became one of the salient features of all subsequent Soviet foreign policy. The mix has caused consternation among students of Soviet affairs. Here are some examples of how major writers have described the problem:

George Kennan writes that in 1920 the Soviets desired, on the one hand, to obtain technical and economic assistance from the West, while on the other hand they supported revolutionary activities in Western countries.

> There was thus established at this early date, the ambiguity and contradictoriness of Soviet policy which has endured to the present day: the combination of the doctrine of co-existence with the most determined effort behind the scenes to destroy the Western governments and the social and political systems supporting them.[17]

Although Kennan points to the ambiguity that the mixture of realism and internationalism poses for the analyst trying to understand Soviet conduct, he concludes that right after the revolution, the communist doctrine acquired a "rubbery consistency which it has today [1960], and which permits it to be used as an infinitely flexible rationalization for anything whatsoever that the regime finds it advantageous to do."[18]

But the above ambiguity, notwithstanding the appearance of Soviet foreign policy of the 1920s, in many ways resembled

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[17] George Kennan, Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1960, 1961; Scarborough: Mentor, 1960, 1961), 158-59.

[18] Ibid., 258.

that of any power concerned with its own security. Lionel Kochan claims that the "circumstances [imposed on the Soviet Government] the necessity of choosing either foreign policy or revolution."[19] Adam Ulam adds that

> Soviet relations with Germany and Soviet policy on Germany's role in Europe were then [1920s] handled primarily from the viewpoint of formal Soviet diplomacy, rather than that of its Siamese twin, the Comintern...[20]

But why assume the revolutionary aims and the traditional foreign policy concerns had to be incompatible? Franz Borkenau observed that "there is hardly a leading man in world affairs who did not regard the communists alternately as hopeless and insignificant Utopians and as dangerous, unscrupulous, and hard boiled realists."[21] To repeat, it is this combination of realism and utopianism in Soviet foreign policy which presented so much trouble for generations of Western analysts.

This ambiguity in Soviet foreign policy is evident in the history of the interwar Soviet-German relations. In these relations, even the most discernible aspects of traditional diplomacy were always coloured by Soviet ideological dispute with German Social Democrats. From the standpoint of the

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[19] Lionel Kochan, Russia and the Weimar Republic (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1954), 31.

[20] Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1968), 146.

[21] Franz Borkenau, World Communism, with an Introduction by Raymond Aron (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1962, 1971), 180.

traditional realist interpretation of Soviet international behaviour, this is difficult to explain. Realists readily point to Stalin's accommodation of Hitler in the 1930s as proof that traditional foreign policy considerations always won out over revolutionary aims, but the pattern of Stalinist foreign policy can just as well be traced to the Bolsheviks traditional disdain for the Social Democratic Party.

In November 1918, when Wilhelm II abdicated and dissolved his government, it appeared that the events of the Russian revolution would repeat themselves in Germany. The collapse of the German Reich was followed with the formation of a socialist dominated Provisional government and a simultaneous creation of workers and soldiers councils resembling the Russian soviets.[22] Lenin, observing events from Moscow, had every reason to be optimistic, but his enthusiasm was short lived. In one very important detail the collapse of the German Monarch was much different from what happened in Russia - the German army did not break down.

Therefore, the change of government in Germany brought no relief to the embattled Bolshevik leadership. Even though a Social Democratic Chancellor, Friedrich Ebert, assumed power in Berlin, the Soviets were still confronted with by and large the same people who forced them to sign the Brest-Litovsk

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[22] Werner T. Angress, "The Takeover That Remained in Limbo: the German Experience, 1918-1923," in The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers, ed. Thomas T. Hammond (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1975), 163.

treaty only a few months before. If anything, this alone must have served to reinforce Lenin's ideas about the treachery of the German Social Democratic party. Subsequently, dealing with the worst of bourgeois reactionaries was preferable to dealing with the representatives of the Social Democratic parties.

The above contempt for social democracy was illustrated in the Soviet approach to the normalization of diplomatic relations with Germany. One of the earliest and overriding concerns of the Bolshevik leadership was to be recognized as the legitimate government of Soviet Russia. The recognition was needed in order to block foreign intervention and, quite simply, to win some time for consolidation of the revolutionary victories at home. Germany, being one of the defeated powers, and in opposition to Great Britain and France, became a natural candidate for Russian overtures. It also helped that rudimentary (not full) diplomatic relations already existed from the time of Brest-Litovsk. The negotiations were extensive and involved a solemn pledge of the two governments not to become involved in each other's internal affairs, but when the Germans proposed to send Social Democrat August Mueller as their representative in Moscow, "the Kremlin categorically refused to receive a Social Democrat."[23] This refusal was made for ideological reasons

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[23] Gustav Hilger and Alfred G. Meyer, The Incompatible Allies (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), 70.

and became a typical example of Soviet policies toward Germany during the interwar period.

These policies were pursued on two planes. On the one hand, the Soviets were engaged in a strenuous effort to undermine the German Socialist Party, while on the other, they were pursuing normal diplomatic relations with the German government. Thus, the claim that the Soviets were only interested in pursuing traditional concerns of Russian diplomacy neglects to consider the ideological element of the policy.

THE GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE RISE OF HITLER

After the German revolution of 1918 failed to transform itself into a "dictatorship of proletariat" on the Russian model, Lenin resurrected his earlier charge that the "basic factor in the defeat was betrayal by reformist leaders."[24] In the next few years there were a few more uprisings in which the communists were involved, but all came to naught.

Following their conviction that the basic motive behind the failures was the Social Democratic leadership of the German working class, the Bolsheviks became convinced that a revolution would not succeed until the workers had separated from their "reformist" leadership. Thus, the task for the communists was to create their own parties where none existed, or to splinter the existing socialist parties. In December 1919, at a Congress in Berlin, the Spartacus League responded

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[24] Fernando Claudin, The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform, trans. Brian Perce and Francis MacDonagh (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), 56.

to the Russian call and broke away from the Independent Socialist Party of Germany (USPD) in order to reconstitute itself as the Communist Party of Germany (KPD).[25] Immediately after its creation the new party became involved in an ill-conceived Berlin rising, led by the left wing of the USPD. It was not a large affair, but in its aftermath, the young party lost two of its most able leaders, Rosa Luxembourg and Carl Liebknechnt.

Lenin was not impressed with the revolutionary programme of the KPD and criticised its decision to boycott the German Parliamentary elections. Writing in April of 1920 he urged the party to unite with the left wing of the USPD and join the electoral process. [26]

The main point of recounting these events is to emphasize that Soviet strategy toward the German labour movement was to splinter it. This was an old Bolshevik method which was successfully employed by Lenin in his long quest for power. Once a reliable communist party was established in Germany, its principal task became to fight the German Social Democratic Party for control of the masses and to seize power if possible.

Thus, the Comintern's desire to splinter the German socialist movement set the communists on the road where they

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[25] Braunthal, History, 124. Richard Lowenthal, "The Bolshevisation of the Spartacus League,"in International Communism (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), 27.

[26] V. Lenin, "Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder" in Lenin Anthology, 593.

eventually became instrumental in Hitler's rise to power in 1933. By that time, Stalin was firmly in control of Soviet policy and, therefore, he is often credited with a deliberate destruction of the German Communist Party in the name of Soviet foreign policy. But, as W. Ireland argues, this destruction came about because of mistaken revolutionary tactics, and not as a product of deliberate Soviet policy.[27] The tone for the KPD's electoral behaviour in the early 1930s was set long before that time.

In 1925, Friedrich Ebert, the first President of the Weimar Republic died in office and elections were called to choose his successor. A year before, the Comintern had developed a thesis that "International Social Democracy has now become a wing of the Fascist movement" and the KPD announced that "the total liquidation of the German Social Democratic Party is recognized as our central task."[28] If this language appears as something new, it must be remembered that only four years before Lenin was denouncing the social democratic leaders for their "baseness and social treachery."[29] Therefore, the communists would do anything in order to prevent a candidate endorsed by the Social Democratic Party from winning the presidential elections.

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[27] Waltraud Ireland, "The Lost Gamble: The Theory and Practice of the Communist Party of Germany Between Social Democracy and National Socialism, 1929-1931" (Ph.D. diss., The John Hopkins University, 1971), chap., 7.

[28] Brauntal, History, 298.

[29] Lenin, Anthology, 551.

On the first ballot, as expected, none of the parties received a majority. For the second ballot, the parties of the centre, including the SPD, chose only one candidate, Wilhelm Marx. The parties of the right persuaded Field-Marshal Paul von Hindenburg to stand as their candidate. The communists, instead of withdrawing from the race in order to deny a victory to the conservatives, decided to keep their candidate, Ernst Thaelmann, for the second ballot. When the results were counted, Hindenburg won with 14,655,000 votes. The centre and socialist candidate generated 13,751,000 votes, while the communists acquired 1,931,000 votes.[30] Thus, the right wing of the German political spectrum got control of the Presidency courtesy of the Communist Party of Germany. If the KPD had cooperated with the centre, it is likely that the rise of the Nazi party would have taken different course. The electoral behaviour of the KDP repeated itself over and over, right to the end.

THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT

One of the Soviet foreign policy actions often cited as the supreme example of triumph of Realpolitik over ideology is the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. Reading about Soviet-German negotiations leading to the pact provides a telling insight into the Machiavellian guile of Hitler and Stalin.[31] However,

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[30] Braunthal, History, 299.

[31] See for example R.H. Haigh, D.S. Morris, and R.H. Peters, Soviet Foreign Policy, The League of Nations and Europe, 1917-1939 (Aldershot: Gover, 1986), 99-117. Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Pub., 1967), 264-279.

while Hitler's motives for the agreement are evident, Stalin's are not as clear as they appear on first examination.

The standard Western interpretation of Soviet reasons behind the treaty often coincide with what the Soviets had to say during the communist era. The Short History of the Communist Party argues that the pact was signed for security reasons because the "Soviet Union was threatened with a war on two fronts - in Europe and the Far East."[32] The pact, in this instance, is seen as a clever tactical move which bought the Soviet Union the time necessary to build up its defenses for the inevitable war with Germany.

According to E.H. Carr, "the essential aim of Soviet foreign policy [during the late 1930s] was to avoid isolation, [therefore] an understanding with one or other of the rival capitalist groups was a condition of Soviet security.[33] He also argues that

> [a]n undeclared frontier war in the Far East between Soviet Russia and Japan had been in progress since May 1939, and had a substantial influence on the Soviet-German negotiations. If the avoidance of war on two fronts was the compelling motive of the Germans in the rapprochement with Russia, it was constantly present in the thoughts of the Soviet negotiators.[34]

The above argument that Stalin was mainly concerned with the security needs of the Soviet state is echoed by Joseph L.

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[32] CPSU, A Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), 239.

[33] E.H. Carr, German-Soviet Relations Between the Two World Wars, 1919-1939 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1951), 135.

[34] Ibid., 133.

Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, who write in their basic text on Soviet foreign policy that "[h]is decision to align with Nazi Germany in August 1939 was made on political and military, not ideological grounds."[35]

But these standard interpretations, which are Realist in perspective in their focus on security, raise some questions. First of all, from a purely military point of view, if Stalin expected to fight the Nazis in the near future, extending the Soviet frontier into Eastern Poland in 1939 did not contribute to more security.

One of the realities which has for centuries plagued countries of East-Central Europe, like Germany, Poland, and Russia, has been the dearth of naturally defensible borders. In 1939 Russian armies were stationed behind the Pripyet Marshes that run along the old Polish-Soviet border. After the pact was signed with Germany, Stalin moved his armies into the open plain. As Bertram Wolfe points out,

> to the historian there was no novelty in Stalin's partition of Poland with Hitler. ...The novelty was the military ignorance (or was it faith in Hitler?) that led Stalin to station his main armies in front of the river [Pripyet] and swamps, so that these served to hinder not the Wehrmacht's advance, but Soviet armies retreat.[36]

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[35] Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II, 3rd ed. (New York: Pargamon Press, 1988), 26.

[36] Bertram Wolfe, An Ideology in Power: Reflections on Russian Revolution (New York: Stain and Day, Publishers, 1969), 348.

Alex Nove adds that while there were some defensive preparations in the newly occupied (Polish) territories, they "went ahead without the urgency which the situation demanded."[37] One may also add that Hitler gained raw materials and drove fear in the hearts of the West, and Stalin was no more ready in 1941 than he had been in 1939.

Much has been written about Stalin's surprise and shock with the German invasion in 1941 and about the utter unpreparedness of the Soviet army facing the invader. An explanation of Stalin's behaviour during this time may be found in the argument suggesting he was satisfied that he created a situation in which the "imperialists" would fight each other while the Soviet Union was left on the sidelines. Engineering this situation had as much to do with Soviet security as with communist ideology.

Russian historians, such as Prof. Vyacheslav Dashichev and Vasily Kulish have recently advanced the argument that Stalin actually desired to create a revolutionary situation in Europe. We may recall that it was Lenin who wrote that war is a catalyst for revolution.

To support the above view, Kulish cites a conversation which took place on September 7, 1939 between Stalin and the Bulgarian communist Dimitrov. In it the Soviet leader said:

> We don't mind if they [imperialist powers] have a good fight and weaken one another... Hitler, not realizing and not wishing this, shakes and undermines the capitalist system.

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[37] Alex Nove, Stalinism and After (London: Allen and Unwin, 1975), 82.

> We can manoeuvre, set one side against the other so that they knock one another better.[38]

Kulish explains that Stalin's interest in the problem of "turning the imperialist war into a revolutionary war" had a long history. He raised the issue during the "January Plenary Meeting of CPSU in 1925 and at the 17th Congress in 1934."[39]

According to Dashichev, the British and French policy of military non-interventions against Germany in the late 1930s was viewed by Stalin as proof that the imperialists feared "that revolution might break out, if the non-aggressive states [England and France] were to go to war and the war were to assume world wide proportions."[40] He quotes Stalin as saying at the 18th Party Congress in March 1939 that

> the bourgeois politicians know, of course that the first imperialist war led to the victory of the revolution in one of the large countries. They are afraid that the second imperialist war may also lead to the victory of the revolution in one or several countries.[41]

While Stalin did not spell out the consequences of the above argument for Soviet foreign policy, Dashichev quotes another speaker from the Congress who did. Lev Mekhlis, the head of the Chief Political Department of the Red Army, openly said how he understood Stalin's assignment:

> If the second world war turns a sharp end

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[38] Vasily Kulish, "Was There a Choice," Moscow News, 3 September 1989, 12.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Vyacheslav Dashichev, "Stalin in Early 1939," Moscow News, 27 August 1989, 16.

[41] Ibid.

> against the world's first socialist state our task will be to shift military action onto the enemy's territory, to fulfil our internationalist obligations and to add to the number of Soviet Republics.[42]

The above statement, made in March 1939, is devastating in its accuracy if we consider the subsequent developments in Eastern Europe.

Since the time of glasnost, Russian historians have argued strongly for the role of ideology in Stalin's behaviour. Not having our dedication to the Realist perspective, they were able to see Stalin's long range plans (following Lenin's dream of a capitalist conflagrations out of which emerges a world socialist system) as involving more than simple security.

After all, if security were the central issue, Stalin would be an enormous failure - he created Hitler, he destroyed his own army so Hitler would invade, and he enhanced his security by an accident of fortune - that the Allies won the war. He was driven by an idea, and in the process he almost destroyed his country. This is not the stuff of a Bismarck or a Kissinger, and applying the criteria which may explain the behaviour of the latter, one cannot understand Stalin.

CONCLUSION

In order to understand the post WWII dynamics of Soviet foreign policy one must become aware of the importance of the relationship between communist ideology and the traditional concerns of the state. Under the influence of Realism, the

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[42] Ibid.

mainstream of American Sovietology concentrated its efforts on the analysis of the "traditional" interests of the U.S.S.R., i.e. the quest for security. The questions dealing with ideology were relegated to the background. This in turn produced a distorted view of reality. I think that it was the pragmatic nature of the Leninist tradition which contributed greatly to this problem.

The present chapter reviewed the history of interwar German-Soviet relations in order to illustrate how easily a pragmatic pursuit of ideological ends can be misconstrued as a pursuit of traditional diplomacy. The fact is, in 1917 the Bolsheviks inherited many of the old concerns of the previous government, but they also added their own ideas into the policy-making process.

Germany figures prominently in both Russian and Soviet diplomatic history. But leaving the old history aside, we can recall Lenin's hope of a proletarian revolution in that country. When the revolution failed to materialize, the Soviets blamed the German Social Democratic Party. From that point forward (1918), social democrats became the number one enemy of the Soviet communists. This ideological war with German socialists eventually led to some real losses to the Soviet state, something that is hard to explain using the Realist approach.

The standard interpretation of Stalin's foreign policy toward Germany during the period under review sees him

pursuing traditional power politics. But as I have argued, his policies did not stray from the parameters set up by Lenin.

One of his objectives was to create a revolutionary situation in Germany which would have benefited, he thought, the KPD. The communists did in fact contribute to the atmosphere of unrest in Germany in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, but the beneficiary turned out to be another revolutionary party, the Nazis. From a pure "national interest" point of view, the experiment of creating a revolutionary situation in Germany ended in utter disaster not only for the KPD, but also for the Soviet Union.

The Nazi-Soviet pact has long been regarded as the best example of Stalin's disregard of ideology. However, recent changes in the former Soviet Union are making available archival materials which were previously off limits, and some historians are starting to view the pact in a new light. What is brought to the surface is the extent of Stalin's commitment to communist ideology.

SUMMARY

Unlike physicists or chemists, social scientists have a limited opportunity to test their theories. There is not only the problem of understanding the multiplicity of variables which make up the social interaction, but also the obvious difficulty of designing meaningful (controlled) experiments.

For many reasons, this is especially true for the students of international relations. Our "laboratory" is the entire world made up of national and subnational actors interacting with one another. The task is to understand the nature of this interaction. This is an enormously complicated job when one considers the diversity of interchange which takes place. But, once in a while, events occur which offer us an unusual opportunity to examine our theories.

One such opportunity was provided by the rapid changes which took place in the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s.

As illustrated in the first chapter, leading scholars in the field argued just prior to Mikhail Gorbachev's most dramatic moves (the liberation of Eastern Europe, reunification of Germany) that the Soviet Union could not, for strategic and political reasons, afford such action.

As the events unfolded, the explanations became somewhat circular. At first, the argument was that even if Eastern Europe lost its immediate strategic importance for the Soviet Union, maintaining the prestige of a Great Power would prevent the Soviets from withdrawing from the area. Afterwards, the

argument was that the Soviets had no choice but to withdraw and concentrate on their internal problems in order to preserve their Great Power status.

After examining the work of Kennan, Bialer, Brzezinski, and Hough one can conclude that they all believed that many elements of Soviet foreign policy did not depend on the ideological predisposition of whoever was in charge of that policy. Rather, they explained Soviet actions, for example, the post-W.W.II Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, in terms of Great Power politics.

It is interesting to note that both Brzezinski and Hough approached the Soviet Union from two different ideological perspectives, yet both arrived at similar conclusions regarding the motivation behind Soviet foreign policy. Together with Bialer and Kennan, they assigned a major role to the traditional Great Russian security concerns.

This interpretation was greatly influenced by the traditional Realist approach to foreign relations. As was shown in chapter two, the Realist approach discounts the ideological variables, and leaves us with some questions about a usable theory of action.

Although Realism defies a simple definition, due to the diversity of views of its many adherents, some points are quite salient to the theory, the anarchic nature of the international system being one of them. Following this, the states in the international system behave according to a certain type of logic which is dictated by the system itself.

Accordingly, in the Realist theory, the scope for independent human action is of lesser importance than the systemic variables. But the international system, as we know it, has quite recent historical origin and is the result of deliberate human action. The anarchical nature of the system should not be taken for granted. But it is also important to emphasize that the state is still the principal player in the international arena with little indication that this is about to change.

What is of significance for Realism is that some states have moved past the traditional anarchy in their relations with each other. As Michael Doyle had pointed out, Western liberal democracies are able to resolve their disputes without resorting to war.

This does not mean that war has been banished, but it does mean that there exists a firm basis for investigating the conditions of peace.

The peace which exists among the liberal democracies also has important implications for the study of war. Why is there peace among certain nations and not others? This moves the debate past the structural aspects of realism.

Exploring the interwar Soviet-German relations can illustrate that ideology was as important for both sides as were the various strategic considerations.

For a long time, the destruction of the German Communist Party and the Nazi-Soviet Pact were seen as the supreme examples of Power Politics. But as new evidence arrives there

is the possibility that the Soviets were all along pursuing policies dictated as much by ideology as anything else.

This thesis does not conclude with a call to abandon Realism.[43] As the state is not about to lose its significance in international affairs, it would be unwise to abandon a theory which concentrates on the power of the state. But what is needed is a better understanding of what moves the state to act in a particular way in the global arena.

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[43] For a recent argument which wants to step beyond Realism see Ken Booth, "Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice," International Affairs 67 (July, 1991): 539-41.

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